REBORN AS A SPACE MERCENARY

I WOKE UP PILOTING THE STRONGEST STARSHIP!

MANGA

ART:
Shunichi Matsui

STORY:
Ryuto

CHARACTER DESIGN:
Tetsuhiro Nabeshima

Volume 5: Turmoil in the Cierra System

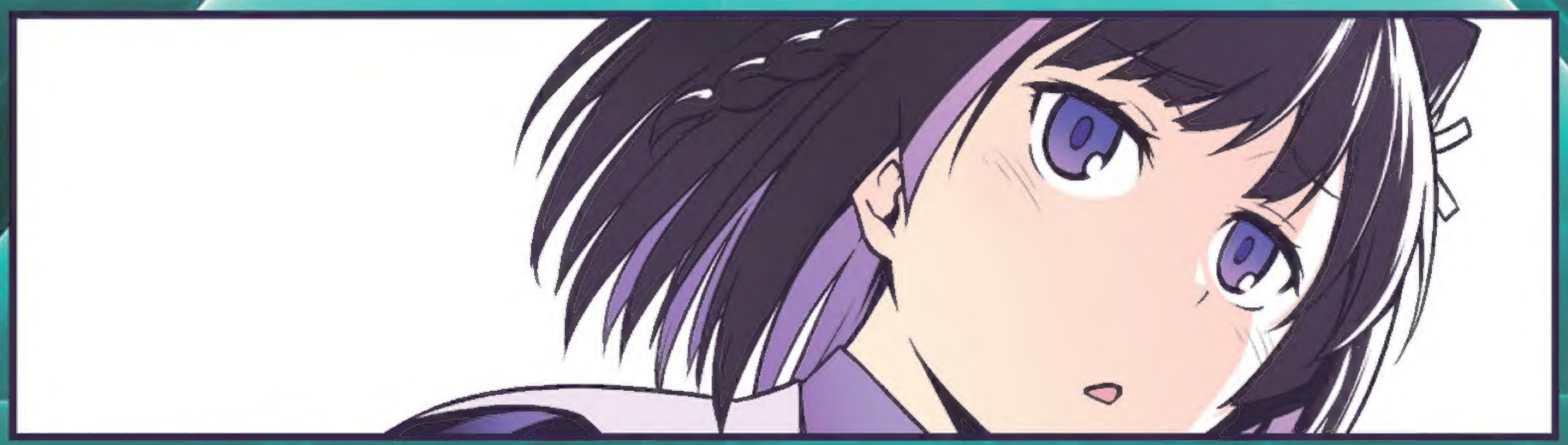
ART:
Shunichi Matsui

STORY:
Ryuto

CHARACTER DESIGN:
Tetsuhiro Nabeshima

REBORN AS A SPACE MERCENARY

I WOKE UP PILOTING THE STRONGEST STARSHIP!



OUR SINCEREST APOLOGIES, MA'AM.

STO--

WE HAVE TO ASK YOU TO LEAVE, MA'AM.

WAI --!

AH, MY APOLOGIES, MA'AM.

WHA --?

SLAP

YOWCH!

I AM THE DAUGHTER OF MARQUESS HOLZ!

push

push

EXCUSE ME!! STOP PUSHING ME!!

HOW RUDE!! RUDE, I SAY!

:::

DID YOU STILL NEED SOMETHING ELSE?

W-WELL...

WELL?

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TURNED DOWN YOUR OFFERS NOW?

URK...

AM I WRONG?

TCH! SO ANNOY-ING...

HOW DARE YOU "TCH" ME?! AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!

Chapter 21

?

IT'S...

IT'S JUST NOT FAIR!

SHOUT !!

MEANWHILE, YOU ALL GET TO GO TO A RESORT IN THE CIERRA SYSTEM?!!

.....

I'M HERE, STUCK AT WORK, BUSY AS ALWAYS!

GRAH!

STOP SAYING THAT!

Sigh...

Oh nonono...

SO ANNOY-ING...

A FRIEN--?!

DON'T CARE. I DON'T WANNA BE NICE, OR HAVE HER THINKING WE'RE FRIENDS.

YOU DON'T FEAR CON-SEQUENCES, BUT...

SHE IS THE MARQUESS'S DAUGHTER.

WAIT, HOW'D YOU KNOW WHERE WE'RE HEADED?

CREEPY...

UMM, CAPTAIN, THERE'S NO NEED TO REACT LIKE THAT...

AND WE NEED TO GO GET READY.

VAY.

TION.

ERR... W- WELL...

OUR...

WE ARE GOING TO A RESORT SYSTEM FOR...

CAY.

SO?

?

beam

.....

GRRRRR...

SH-

YES!! YOU'RE BEING IMPRU-DENT!!

WHIP!

SUCH IMPRU-DENCE!!

MANY LIVES WERE LOST.

TRULY TRAGIC...

THE COLONY SUFFERED GREAT DAMAGE DURING THE TERRORIST ATTACK.

WE ARE?

YES, YOU ARE!!

HUH?

GRAH!

AND YET YOU WOULD HAVE A *HOLIDAY!* YOUR IMPRUDENCE IS BOUND-LESSS!!

GLOW

OH, I SEE.

HONESTLY, I THINK YOU TRYING TO USE A TRAGEDY TO KEEP US HERE IS WHAT'S IMPRUDENT.

URK...

SHOCK

THAT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH US.

WHA--?!

WHA--?! HEY!! CEASE!! RIGHT THIS INSTANT!!

strain...

PUSH

PUSH

ALL RIGHTY, THEN. HERE'S THE DOOR. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

OH JEEZ, WOULD YOU TWO JUST CALM DOWN?

shove

YAMMER

YAMMER

UH-OH...

THIS IS THE EPITOME OF INSOLENCE!! I'LL HAVE YOUR HEAD FOR THIS!

YOU DARE LAY HANDS ON THE UNMARRIED DAUGHTER OF THE MARQUESS?!!

YAMMER

YAMMER

I'LL ONLY ASK ONCE MORE. WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

SO...

ERM...

I'M TOSSING YOU OUT BY FORCE.

WITH THE POWER ARMOR IF I MUST.

IF I DON'T LIKE YOUR REASON...

?

glance

?

glance

?

SIIIGH...

HUH?

I DIDN'T CATCH THAT.

MUMBLE

I WAS... LOUIS...

.....

I SAID I WAS JEALOUS!!

SHOUT

I'M JEALOUS, AND ENVIOUS, SO I KEEP COMING BACK!!

CLAT-

TER

I JUST SAID!!

LIKE

EXCUSE ME?!

YOU'RE DAMN WELL RIGHT IT IS!!

ROAR

YELL

IS THAT A PROB-LEM?!

BECAUSE I HAVE PAPERWORK, AND MEETINGS, ABOUT FUTURE COUNTER-MEASURES!

hurk

BUT IT'S NOT FAIR!!

I'VE SPENT EVERY SINGLE DAY FOR WEEKS LOOKING AT PICTURES OF THOSE GROSS TENTACLE THINGS...

clat.

ter

YEAH, IT'S A HUGE PAIN IN THE BUTT!

IS IT SO BAD THAT I COME BY TO MEDDLE FOR A BIT?!

SOB SOB

BUT YOU, YOU ALL GO ON VACATION!

slam slam

Waaaahhh!

NO, NO, NO! IT'S NOT FAIR!!

I WANT A VACATION, TOO!!

slam slam

OH MY GOD... IS SHE SERIOUSLY THROWING A TANTRUM?

I KNEW THAT YOU REALLY JUST LIKED MESSING WITH ME!

HNN...

nod

YOU'RE SAD FOR BEING LEFT ALONE TO DO WORK...

AND YOU'RE JEALOUS THAT WE'RE GOING ON VACATION?

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HONOR AS A SOLDIER AND PRIDE AS A NOBLE?

SIGH...

tearY-eyed...

TOP BEAM

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M DOING THIS...

VA-

WHOOSH

Let! Me! Go!!

WAAAH!!!

NOOOOOOOOO!!!

YEAH, HONEST ABOUT YOUR SPITEFULNESS! I'M FRESH OUTTA SYMPATHY FOR YOU!

I WAS SO *HONEST* WITH YOU!

LIEU-TENANT SERENA ...

?

IF I MAY?

BICKER BICKER

UMM ...

MEANING THAT YOU'RE HERE NOT AS A SOLDIER OR A NOBLE, BUT ON PERSONAL BUSINESS...

YOU'RE WEARING CIVILIAN CLOTHES, WHICH MEANS YOU'RE OFF DUTY, YES?

MM-HM...

.....

YOU CAME TO HANG OUT WITH CAPTAIN HIRO TO RELAX AND VENT YOUR ANGER?

OKAY, BUT HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO "HANG OUT"?

.....

IS THAT RIGHT?

CL-
'AP!
RIGHT HERE!
LET'S ALL HAVE A DRINK!
HUH?

YOU MEAN THAT MOUNTAIN OF BOOZE YOU BOUGHT ON MY DIME, AND STUFFED IN THE CARGO HOLD...?

URK...

YOUR FAVOR-ITE...?

AND I CAN BRING OUT MY FAVORITE LIQUOR!

IT WON'T BE FANCY, BUT OUR STEEL CHEF CAN MAKE PRETTY TASTY FOOD.

.....

.....

OH, AND YOU OWE ME ANOTHER FAVOR NOW.

HNN... GOT IT...

JUST FOR TODAY, GOT IT?

uh-huh!

uh-huh!

WON'T BE WORTH THE PAIN OF KEEPING HER AROUND.

?

HONESTLY, I FEEL LIKE A FAVOR FROM HER...

CHEEEEERS!

OH, THIS IS SUR-PRISINGLY GOOD.

PAAAHH!

HOW TASTY...

gulp

gulp

glug

YOU ALL MAKE SUCH BIZARRE FINANCIAL CHOICES...

W-WELL, THAT'S CHUMP CHANGE FOR A MERC, NO?

I- I'M NOT LIKE THEM!

WAS A TAD EXPENSIVE, THOUGH.

THAT'S 'CUZ IT'S STRAIGHT FROM THE DISTILLERY!

A HUNDRED THOUSAND ENNER IS NOT A *TAD*!

IT SEEMS THAT YOU'RE NOT MUCH BETTER THAN THEM AFTER ALL.

B-BUT THOSE WERE NECESSARY EXPENSES. QUALITY OF LIFE!

THE TOTAL WAS LIKE... THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND OR SOME-THING?

HIRO SAID YOU HOUNDED HIM INTO BUYING A NEW BATH, WASHING MACHINE, AND THAT FANCY STEEL CHEF AUTO-COOKER.

THEY'RE JUST A BIT...YOU KNOW.

WHAT'S THAT MEAN?

ふふふ

ふふふふ

……

ふふふ

まとまて

ふふふ

AND HOW DO THEY MANAGE TO SWITCH TOPICS EVERY OTHER SENTENCE?

ふふ？

GUESS IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY... "THREE WOMEN MAKE A MARKET."

HOW THE HECK DO THEY FIND SO MUCH TO TALK ABOUT?

?!

WHAT FOOD DID THEY MAKE?

NO CHANCE I COULD KEEP UP WITH THEM.

GLAD THEY'RE HAVING FUN, THOUGH.

GUESS I'LL GRAB A BITE, TOO...

WHAT IS THIS?

UH, MIMI?

YES, CAPTAIN?

DUN

DID THE STEEL CHEF REALLY MAKE THAT?

OH...

DUNNN

HERE.

WHEN DID YOU...?

INTERESTING-LOOKING?

AND AS WE'RE ALL HERE, I THOUGHT WE'D TRY THEM.

WELL, I DOWNLOADED A BUNCH OF INTERESTING-LOOKING RECIPES.

TA-

DA!

PLEASE DIG RIGHT IN!

THOSE ARE OBVI-OUSLY WORMS.

AT LEAST THEY'RE NOT MOVING...

munch munch

NOM!

RCH...

SO...?

EWW...

GULP

YOU SHOULD GIVE 'EM A TRY.

TASTES KINDA LIKE... SEA URCHIN? RICH, WITH A BIT OF SWEET-NESS.

REALLY?

PRETTY TASTY!!

THIS AIN'T HALF BAD!!

HEY!

OH, UMM...

HUH?

AND WHAT EXACTLY IS IT?

YEAH, I'M A FAN. IT'S BETTER THAN IT LOOKS.

LA, LA, LA! I CAN'T HEEEAR YOUUU!

THEY'RE CALLED SPACEWOR--

YOU'LL BE SURPRISED.

WHAT? WHY NOT JUST GIVE IT A TRY?

SHUF

THE SELF-DECEIT IS STRONG WITH THIS ONE.

RUNNING FROM THE TRUTH...

IT'S JUST PASTA! YEAH, SEA URCHIN PASTA!!

HMM, LIKEWISE...

YEAH, NO, I'LL PASS.

ERR, NO, THANK YOU...

JUST THE WAY IT LOOKS IS TOO MUCH FOR ME...

LOOM...

YOU'D NEVER DO THAT, THOUGH. WOULD YOU?

WELL...

WHAAAT?

IT'S BAD MANNERS TO OFFER SOMETHING WITHOUT TRYING IT, Y'KNOW.

HNN...

NO...

AND SO...

BUT ALL WERE DEFINITELY EDIBLE.

ALL OF THEM LOOKED GROSS OR WERE MADE OF UNAPPETIZ-ING STUFF...

OH, YOU'RE RIGHT...

THIS ONE'S NOT BAD, EITHER.

IT REALLY IS GOOD...

NOT BAD, RIGHT?

MIMI HAD PREPARED A VARIETY OF DELICACIES.

OTHER THAN THE BIZARRE FOODS, YOU COULD SAY IT WAS A PRETTY NORMAL DRINKING PARTY...

BUT YOU WOULDN'T, OF COURSE.

DHEY WOULDN'T SHUDDUP!! ALL *LIIKE*, "WHY'S OUR RESCUE TAKING SO LONG?"

!! YELL !!

SLAM!

HNGH ...

TUG...

smack

smack

HIRO, LOOK AT HER GO!! THIS IS *HILARI-OUSSS!!*

Ah ha haha ha!

LIKE, *SOWWY*, I'M JUST IN *DA* MIDDLE OF *DESHTROYING* A PIRATE BASE!! NO BIGGY!!

DHEY GOT GUARDS STATIONED, YA KNOW?! USE 'EM!

CAP'N HIWO...

C'MON, AT LEAST KEEP YOUR CLOTHES ON.

Ba ha ha ha ha!

BLAH

YA KNOW WHAT *DISH* COLSHONY'S PROBLEM *ISH?!*

SEE WHAT I HAVE TO DEAL WITH?

SOMEONE, SAVE ME.

CAPTAIN HIRO!

HUH? WHAT ABOUT ME?

SLOSH

AND YOU!!

.....

tremble tremble tremble...

YA KNOW WHAT DA *COLON-ISHTS* SAID TA ME?

?

YOU JUST HAPPEN'D TO BE *DERE!*

AN' YOU HAD POWA ARMOR TO DEFEND DA PORT AN' PROTECT DA HOSPITAL!

?

SCRUNCH

DHEY WERE ALL MAKIN' PISSY, SARCASTIC COMMENTS LIKE DAT!!

twinge

HE BOUGHT US THE TIME TO DEPLOY EXTERMINATION NANOBOTS!

THAT MERCENARY WAS *WAY* MORE USEFUL THAN THAT *PFFT* UNIT OF YOURS!

VWSH

SERENA?

LET'S JUST CALM DOWN, LIEUTENANT COMMAN-DER...

NOW, NOW...

SHAKE

SHAKE

DHEY WOULDN' HAVE BIOTER-RORISHM IN DA FIRST PLACE IF DHEY WEREN' SO LAX ABOUT SHECURITY!!

FWOOSH

VWOOSH

ISH DERE OWN GUARDS FAULT FOR NOT DEALIN' WIF IT PROPERLY!!

YEAH, SHE'S **REALLY** *DRUNK...*

WHAT'RE--? HUH?

WHUH?

UH?

OH...

THW-UMP

BUT, MAN, SHE'S GOT A LOT GOING ON...

?

SZOOORE

SHE'S ASLEEP?

JUST LIKE CLOCK-WORK...

SHE'S PRETTY BLASÉ ABOUT FORCING HER WAY ONTO A GUY'S SHIP AND CONKIN' OUT, HUH?

HRRM...

MMGH...

OH?

TWITCH

FINALLY AWAKE?

?!

CLAAAANG

JO-

LT!

WHERE AM I?!

YOU'VE BEEN PRETTY STRESSED OUT, *HMM?*

I- I...

NOT THAT THERE'S ANYTHING WRONG WITH CUTTING LOOSE NOW AND AGAIN.

IN ALL SERIOUSNESS, YOU NEED TO BE MORE CAREFUL.

HOPE THE POD'S NOT BROKEN...

BUT...

THIS *IS* THE SECOND TIME WE'VE GONE THROUGH THIS CHARADE.

URGH...

I APOLOGIZE FOR MY BEHAVIOR ...

POTENTIAL HEALTH PROBLEMS ASIDE, YOU HAVE A REPUTATION TO PROTECT.

THERE ARE TONS OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD USE YOUR LAPSES TO THEIR ADVANTAGE.

YES, I AGREE.

I THINK IT'S BEST YOU GET BACK TO YOUR OWN SHIP.

DON'T WANT RUMORS TO START FLYING.

ABOUT EITHER OF US.

I SEE...

YES, I SUPPOSE SO.

.....

IF YOU'RE CHASING PIRATES, I'D BET ON IT.

WILL WE... MEET AGAIN?

WELL, UNTIL THEN...

WILL WE MEET AGAIN!

clunk

clunk

SHE'S A BIT TOO MUCH FOR ME TO HANDLE...

NOT MUCH OF VALUE HERE.

GZZRRRR...

HUH?

WHAT'S UP?

NOTHING WORTH REALLY PULLING STUFF APART FOR...

YEAH...

SOME FOOD AND ALCOHOL, BUT NOT MUCH RARE METAL.

Chapter 22

IS THAT...

I THINK WE GOT SOMETHING BIG...

?

A COLD SLEEP POD?

Sooooo Sunnggghhh...

?

?

WAIT, WHAT?!

THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE!!

.....

A FEW HOURS EARLIER.

VWOOOOOOOSH

OOOOH!

HM? WHAT'S IT SAY?

THIS IS QUITE A MAGNIFICENT PLACE.

"THE SYSTEM IS BLESSED WITH NUMEROUS PLANETS COVERED IN OCEANS AND MOUNTAINS, MANY OF THEM IDEAL PLACES FOR EXPLORING NATURE.

"IN THE CIERRA SYSTEM...

"ONE CAN LAND ON THE PLANETS REGARDLESS OF NOBLE STATUS OR RICHES.

KUH, INTERESTING...

"IT IS FAMOUS AMONG SO-CALLED RESORT SYSTEMS."

BEAUTIFUL SUNSETS DYEING THE BLUE SKIES AND TINTING THE CLOUDS...

IF WE'RE LUCKY, WE MIGHT EVEN BE ABLE TO SEE SHOOTING STARS...

DAY-DREAMING...

WELL, FOR SOMEONE BORN AND RAISED ON A COLONY, THOSE *ARE* RARE SIGHTS.

ISN'T THAT JUST LOVELY ?!!

Y-YEAH, SURE IS...?

Oooh... Aaah...

THAT MAKES SENSE.

WHILE THERE'RE A BUNCH OF LIVABLE PLANETS IN THE SYSTEM...

FROM IMPORT AND EXPORT BASES...

TO ACCOM-MODATIONS FOR THOSE WAITING TO GO PLANET-SIDE...

THAT DOESN'T MEAN THERE AREN'T ANY COLONIES.

SO EACH PLANET'S ORBIT IS SUPER ACTIVE WITH PEOPLE AND CARGO COMING AND GOING.

AND OF COURSE, THAT MEANS ...

THERE ARE VARIOUS COLONIES ALL OVER.

WITH ALL THE WEALTHY PEOPLE AND VALUABLE GOODS IN A SYSTEM LIKE THIS...

PIRATES CAN'T STAY AWAY.

TARGETS FOR PIRATES.

WHICH MEANS THAT PIRATES MUST INCREASE THEIR NUMBERS.

OF COURSE, THOSE BEING TARGETED ARE WELL AWARE OF THIS, SO SECURITY IS TIGHT.

CAPTAIN HIRO.

SO, THE QUESTION IS WHAT WE SHOULD DO...

TEND TO FORM SMALL FLEETS WITH OTHER MERCS.

TO THAT END, INSTEAD OF ACTING SOLO, MERCS LIKE US...

BREEEEEE

BREEEEEE

BREEEEEE

BREEEEEE

WE'RE TEN MINUTES OUT FROM THE CIERRA PRIME COL--

HM?

beep!

BREEEEEE

BREEEEEE

BREEEEEE

THAT'D BE FOR AN INTER-DICTOR.

BREEEEEE

WHAT'S THAT ALARM?

BREEEEEE

THE DETAILS ARE BEYOND ME, BUT THAT MUCH I DO KNOW.

AN INTER-WHAT?

AN INTER-DICTOR IS A PIECE OF TECH THAT CAN FORCE-FULLY PULL ANOTHER SHIP OUT OF FTL.

THWUMP

PROBABLY PIRATES.

IT'S MOST OFTEN USED BY THE MILITARY DURING RAIDS.

BUT THIS TIME...

THE SECOND WE LEAVE FTL, IT'S ON.

GOT IT. PREPPING FOR BATTLE.

OF COURSE IT IS...

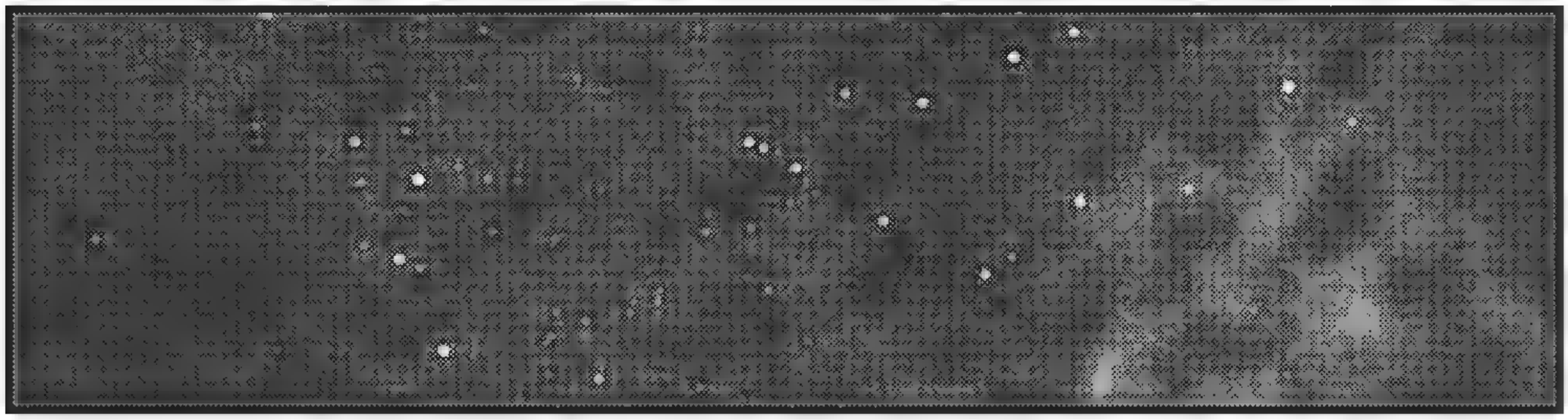
WELL, GUESS WE HAVE TO TAKE 'EM ON.

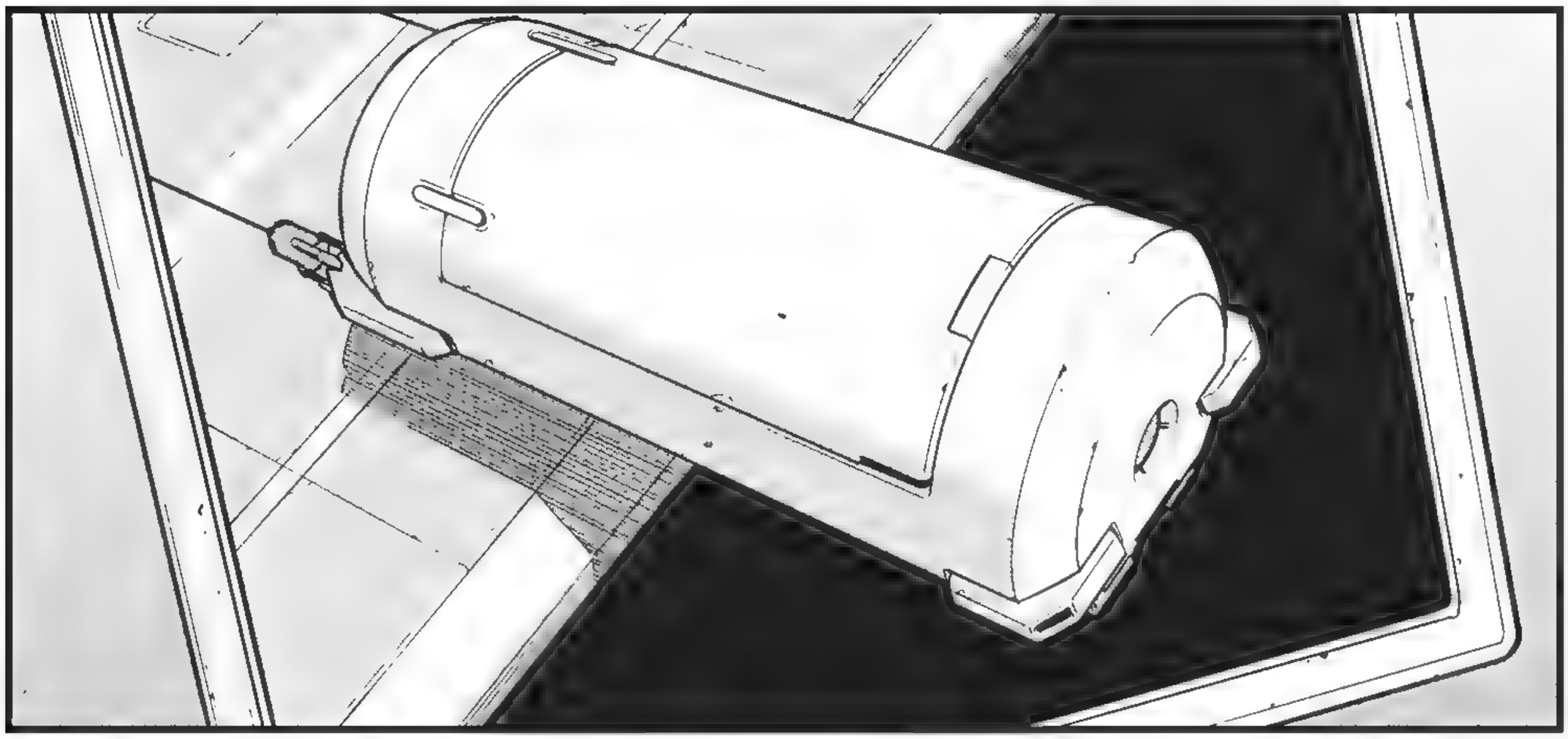
THEY'VE LOCKED ON!! THIRTEEN UNFRIENDLIES!

ALL RIGHT.

VWEEEEEEEM...

VWOOM!
LET'S GO!!





A COLD SLEEP POD... MEANING THERE'S A LIVING PERSON IN THERE?

WE TOOK 'EM ALL OUT QUICKLY AND EASILY, BRINGING US BACK TO THE PRESENT...

EHH, FIGURES...

YEAH, NO.

?

?

IF THE POD'S WORKING, YEAH.

CAN WE JUST PRETEND WE DIDN'T SEE IT...?

WELL, LET'S GRAB IT AND HEAD FOR THE COLONY, I GUESS.

This is the Cierra Prime Port Authority.

Ah, yes, you contacted us earlier about the cold sleep pod.

You are aware of your respon-sibility regarding the pod, correct?

I'M CAPTAIN HIRO OF *KRISHNA*.

PASSENGER SHIPS ARE EQUIPPED WITH COLD SLEEP PODS AS A MEANS OF ESCAPE.

SO, IF YOU FIND ONE FLOATING OUT IN SPACE, YOU'RE OBLIGATED TO BRING IT IN...

LEAVING IT IS A SERIOUS CRIME.

WHAT RESPON-SIBILITY?

OF COURSE, YOU CAN BILL FOR ANY INCURRED EXPENSES AFTER THAT WEEK IS OVER, BUT...

IT ALSO MEANS THAT OUR VACATION, AND PIRATE-HUNTING, ARE ON HOLD FOR A WEEK.

THE RESCUER HAS THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT THE POD OCCUPANT FOR ONE WEEK.

I SEE...

YOU AND I ARE ONLY HERE BECAUSE WE HAD SOMEONE TO HELP US!

THAT'S A GOOD THING.

BUT WE *ARE* HELPING SOMEONE OUT, SO...

'KAY, WE'RE GOOD TO GO.

I GUESS I GOTTA BE IN THE ROOM WHEN THE POD OPENS.

ELMA, CAN YOU COME WITH ME?

SURE.

I'VE GIVEN THE POD A ONCE-OVER...

AND THERE SEEM TO BE NO ISSUES WITH THE OCCUPANT.

WE'RE CURRENTLY REVIVING THEM.

ACCORDING TO THE POD ID, IT WAS FROM A LUXURY PASSENGER SHIP THAT WENT MISSING THREE MONTHS AGO.

YOU SAID THIS POD WAS FOUND AMONG PIRATE DEBRIS...

ITS OCCUPANT IS LIKELY A VIP OF SOME SORT.

HOW-EVER...

WHAT IS THAT?

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

BY A SWORD ...?

POSSIBLY BY A NOBLE'S SWORD.

THE DISTRESS SIGNAL TRANSPONDER HAS BEEN CUT OFF FROM THERE.

.....

SO THOSE RUMORS ABOUT METAL-CUTTING SWORDS IN THIS UNIVERSE ARE TRUE...

BUT WHY THE DISTRESS SIGNAL TRANSPONDER?

VITALS ARE STABLE. OPENING THE POD NOW.

GOOD LUCK...

THAT'S PROBABLY BAD, HUH?

KSSSSSHHHT

VEEEEEEEEEN

?

DON'T ...

A GIRL?

.....

DON'T GO...

FATHER...

Sigh...

?

?

DON'T LEAVE ME...

DON'T WORRY, I WON'T.

SHE...

STAY LIKE THAT TILL SHE WAKES UP.

UHH... WHAT DO I DO NOW?

OH, SHE FELL ASLEEP.

HAHH...

WE'LL GO FINISH UP THE REST OF THE PAPER-WORK.

HUH?

WAIT--

SEE YA.

fwip

MMM...?

SORRY ...

I'M NOT YOUR DAD.

WHERE IS HE?

F- FATHER...?

.....

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WE FOUND.

I APPRECIATE IT, THANK YOU.

HELD MY HAND THIS WHOLE TIME?

YOU...

fwip...
shft
MY NAME IS...
CHRISTINA DALENWALD.

WOW, THAT'S A LOT TO TAKE IN AT ONCE.

I AM THE DAUGHTER OF FRIEDRICH DALENWALD, THE RIGHTFUL HEIR OF COUNT DALENWALD.

UMM ...

I-IS THAT RIGHT...?

I'M HIRO, A HUMBLE MERCENARY AND CAPTAIN OF THE SMALL BATTLESHIP *KRISHNA*.

I SEE, CAPTAIN HIRO.

LIKEWISE, PLEASE SIMPLY CALL ME CHRIS.

YOU MAY CALL ME HIRO.

I IMAGINE YOU'RE PRETTY CONFUSED RIGHT NOW, SO LET ME EXPLAIN.

YES, PLEASE DO.

I AM PREPARED FOR WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO SAY...

?

I SEE...

SO, YOU'LL BE STAYING ON MY SHIP FOR A LITTLE BIT.

YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET ALONG WITH THEM PRETTY EASILY... IF THAT'S OKAY WITH YOU.

OR WE CAN FIND YOU A ROOM ELSE-WHERE.

LUCKILY FOR YOU, MY CREW IS JUST THESE TWO GIRLS.

GREAT.

WELL, ONCE WE GET AHOLD OF YOUR GRANDFATHER, I'M SURE HE'LL BE RIGHT ON HIS WAY.

fwip

fwip

NO, THAT WILL NOT BE NEEDED. I DO NOT WISH TO CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR YOU...

.....

clench

BUT UNTIL THEN, I PROMISE TO PROTECT YOU.

?

YOU WILL?

grin

CAPTAIN HIRO...

WILL YOU REALLY PROTECT ME?

SHUD

SHE WOKE UP AND SUDDENLY HER FAMILY HAD DISAP-PEARED...

OF COURSE SHE'D BE ANXIOUS.

I, HIRO, WILL ACT AS YOUR LOYAL KNIGHT, PRINCESS.

I WILL PUT MY LIFE ON THE LINE TO ACCOMPLISH MY MISSION OF PROTECTING YOU.

TEE HEE!

OR SOME-THING LIKE THAT?

GOTTA DO WHAT I CAN TO EASE HER WORRIES...

giggle

giggle

IT'S AS IF I'M A HEROINE FROM ONE OF MY HOLO-NOVELS!

MY OWN PERSONAL BATTLESHIP-PILOTING KNIGHT, YOU SAY?

CAPTAIN HIRO.

I HEREBY ENTRUST YOU WITH THE DUTY OF BEING MY KNIGHT, AND I ASK...

THAT YOU PLEASE PROTECT ME.

GRIN

I'M MORE THAN HAPPY TO PLAY ALONG.

KEEPING THIS BIT GOING, EH?

OH, SHE'S GETTING IN THE SPIRIT.

OF COURSE! I WOULD LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR YOU, PRINCESS!

MY FATHER WAS MURDERED BY HIS OWN BROTHER, MY UNCLE...

BALTHAZAR DALENWALD.

.....

OH.

IT WAS NOT SPACE PIRATES THAT ATTACKED OUR SHIP, BUT MY UNCLE'S PRIVATE ARMY.

AND AS THE HEIRESS, HE WILL COME AFTER ME AS WELL.

SO, PLEASE ...

DUN-

YOU MUST PROTECT ME...

FROM MY UNCLE'S NEFARIOUS SCHEMING!

DUN

.....

WHUT.

UHH...
fwip
fwip
I HEARD THAT OFTEN HAPPENS WITH COLD SLEEP PODS, SO...
YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT MISREMEM-BERING...?

Chapter 23

THE ATTACKERS WENT AFTER MY FATHER, MOTHER...

AND ME.

NO...

I AM CERTAIN OF IT.

MEANWHILE, MY FATHER STALLED THE ATTACKERS LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO GET AWAY.

MY MOTHER WAS SHOT TRYING TO PROTECT ME.

HER FATHER MUST'VE DONE SO TO STOP THEM FROM FINDING THE POD.

.....

THAT'S WHY THE DISTRESS TRANSPONDER WAS CUT OFF...

OH MAN...

plop

IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT HIS MEN ARE CURRENTLY LURKING IN THE CIERRA SYSTEM.

I AM SURE THAT MY UNCLE NOW KNOWS I ESCAPED...

TALK ABOUT KING-SIZED TROUBLE ...

I WAS PREPARED FOR SOME AMOUNT OF TROUBLE, BUT A NOBLE FAMILY FEUD?

ALL I WANNA DO IS MAKE A FEW BUCKS HUNTING PIRATES, SO I CAN BUY A DETACHED HOUSE WITH A YARD, AND DRINK COLA FOR THE REST OF MY DAYS...!!

HOW THE HECK DO I KEEP GETTING CAUGHT UP IN THESE THINGS?!

I WAS ONLY JOKING...

I'M SORRY, THAT'S PROBABLY A LOT TO HEAR ALL OF A SUDDEN.

SO, THINK OF IT AS A JOKE...

PLEASE JUST PRETEND YOU DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING.

I NEED TO BE PAID.

I MAY BE YOUR KNIGHT, BUT I'M A MERCENARY FIRST.

AND MERCENARIES DON'T COME CHEAP.

ERM... WHAT?

I-I SEE...

NOW IT'S TIME FOR NEGOTIATIONS, PRINCESS.

WHAT'RE YOU OFFERING ME FOR THIS JOB?

MY APOLO-GIES...

I DON'T CURRENTLY HAVE ANYTHING TO...

pat

shuff shuff

AH, HERE...

RAISE...

I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S VERY VALUABLE, BUT...

.....

IT'S A PERSONAL TREASURE.

Shwip

OKAY, YOU GOT A DEAL!!

BUT I GOTTA KEEP UP APPEAR-ANCES AS A MERC.

SHIF...

HONESTLY, I DON'T CARE IF THIS PENDANT'S WORTH ANYTHING.

MY PRINCESS.

OF COURSE, I'M SURE YOUR GRANDFATHER WILL PAY A BOUNTY.

I'LL RETURN THIS AS SOON AS THE JOB'S DONE...

PAT

THEN IT IS SETTLED...

?

FWSH

shft

MY KNIGHT.

=

chk

thak

chk

thak

AFTER THAT...

HUNH, SO THIS IS A HOLO-MESSAGE RECORDING ROOM...

SHE GAVE AS MANY DETAILS AS POSSIBLE, BUT SAID NOTHING ABOUT HER UNCLE'S SCHEMING.

WHILE WE GOT ALL THE VARIOUS PAPER-WORK DONE WITH...

CHRIS WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT THE ATTACK.

I SENT ELMA BACK TO THE SHIP, THOUGH.

SO, HERE WE ARE FOR CHRIS TO RECORD A HOLO-MESSAGE FOR HIM, BUT...

SHE'D TOLD ME THE DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO GO PUBLIC FALLS TO HER GRANDFATHER, THE CURRENT FAMILY HEAD.

SHE DOESN'T WANT RUMORS OF A FAMILY FEUD GETTING AROUND.

YOUR MESSAGE WILL REACH ITS DESTINATION IN FIVE DAYS, AT THE SOONEST.

A HOLO-MESSAGE IS BASICALLY A 3D VIDEO LETTER.

AND WHILE THERE ARE FTL COMMUNICATIONS, THE DISTANCE BETWEEN SYSTEMS MEANS THAT EVEN THEY TAKE TIME.

System B

Several Thousand Light Years

Several Hundred Million Kilometers

System-A

WELL, IT'S MUCH FASTER THAN THE INTRASYSTEM, BUT THIS ADDRESS IS IN ANOTHER SYSTEM, SEVERAL HUNDRED LIGHT YEARS AWAY...

THAT'S A PRETTY LONG TIME.

IF IT'S FIVE DAYS TO GET THERE AND FIVE MORE FOR A REPLY, HER ESCORT WILL BE EVEN LONGER AFTER THAT...

MAY WE HAVE THE ROOM TO OURSELVES?

YES, OF COURSE.

I SHALL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING ELSE.

A SIMPLE INTRO-DUCTION WILL DO.

HUH? I'M STAY-ING?

AND DON'T WORRY. ALL TRANSMISSIONS ARE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

HOOO...

Beginning recording.

BIP

HERE WE ARE.

O-OKAY...

TSSKT

HELLO, GRAND-FATHER.

IT IS ME, CHRISTINA. IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME SINCE WE LAST SPOKE.

THREE MONTHS AGO, OUR SHIP WAS ATTACKED. HOWEVER, AS YOU CAN SEE, I AM UNHARMED.

I ESCAPED IN A COLD SLEEP POD AND AM CURRENTLY AT THE CIERRA PRIME PORT AUTHORITY.

THIS IS CAPTAIN HIRO, A MERCENARY.

.....

clench

HE IS THE ONE THAT FOUND MY POD ADRIFT IN SPACE AND SAVED ME.

I OWE HIM MY LIFE.

DUN-

OUR SHIP WAS ATTACKED BY MY UNCLE'S MEN.

DUN

GRAND-FATHER...

fwip

fwip

AS FOR THEIR CURRENT WHERE-ABOUTS...

BOTH MOTHER AND FATHER DEFENDED ME, GIVING ME THE CHANCE TO ESCAPE.

THEY WERE DRESSED AS PIRATES, BUT FATHER SAID THEY WERE BALTHAZAR'S PERSONAL SOLDIERS.

HE HAS AGREED TO TAKE RESPON-SIBILITY FOR MY PROTEC-TION...

I'VE ALREADY SPOKEN TO CAPTAIN HIRO ABOUT MY SITUATION.

I BELIEVE THAT MY UNCLE IS STILL HUNTING ME.

I AM CAPTAIN HIRO.

IT IS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.

I AM BUT A SIMPLE MERCENARY, HOWEVER, UNTIL YOU, COUNT DALENWALD, ARRIVE...

HE IS CURRENTLY THE ONLY PERSON I CAN RELY ON.

I SHALL DO MY UTMOST TO PROTECT LADY CHRISTINA.

THOUGH WE MET ONLY A SHORT TIME AGO, I BELIEVE HIM A TRUSTWORTHY ALLY.

MAY WE MEET AGAIN SOON.

I HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ASSIST US, GRAND-FATHER.

?

bip

LET'S GET YOU BACK TO MY SHIP.

pat...

Y'KNOW, A MERCENARY AND A PRINCESS REALLY STAND OUT...

NOT TO WORRY.

WE BETTER STOCK UP ON THOSE.

OH, WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT BASIC NECESSITIES FOR ME?

AH, THANKS FOR THE REMINDER.

shup

IF WE HOLD HANDS, WE SHOULD APPEAR TO BE SIBLINGS.

I GUESS SO.

IT'D PROBABLY BE EASIER IF YOU WENT WITH THEM.

THEN AGAIN, THERE'RE THE TWO GIRLS ON MY CREW, SO...

WELL, IT'S A LONG STO--

RY?!

OH, YES. HOW DID THOSE TWO COME TO BE PART OF YOUR CREW?

U-UM, CHRIS?

Crik Crik Crik Crik Crik Crik

?

?

SMILE

YES?

NOBLE WOMEN ARE OPEN-MINDED.

SWIP

WELL, FORTUNATELY FOR YOU...

OH, RIGHT, CHRIS...

=

OUCH...

shf

shf

WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT FOR?

SH-

XXX

WOOP!

YOUR UNCLE'S HENCHMEN MIGHT BE AROUND HERE.

UNFOR-TUNATELY, I'M NOT THE BEST AT STUFF LIKE TAILING PEOPLE OR HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT...

BUT JUST KEEP YOUR GUARD UP UNTIL WE'RE BACK AT THE SHIP.

I DOUBT THEY'D TRY ANYTHING TOO BOLD IN FRONT OF A CROWD...

THE TOP SWORDSMEN CAN BLOCK LASERFIRE, YOU KNOW.

UH, SWORD-FIGHTING? IF I GET SHOT AT, I'M DONE FOR.

A DEAD KNIGHT IS OF NO USE TO YOU.

MAYBE I OUGHTA TAKE THIS OPPOR-TUNITY TO LEARN A MARTIAL ART.

I WOULD RECOMMEND THE BLADE.

YOU ARE A KNIGHT, AFTER ALL!!

XXX

WHAT? NO WAY!

I'VE SEEN THOSE MOVIES!

AND THE BEST OF THE BEST CAN EVEN REFLECT THOSE SHOTS RIGHT BACK.

SUCH THINGS ARE POSSIBLE, OR SO I'M TOLD.

WITH A POWERFUL DATA-PROCESSING BRAIN IMPLANT...

MY UNCLE IS A MASTER OF DUAL-WIELDING SWORDS.

GUESS I HAVE TO BE CAREFUL, EVEN WITH A GUN ON ME...

HOW PRUDENT. AND BY THE WAY...

BEE-

EAM

WHY, HELLO!!

GRAB

I'M MIMI!

I HOPE WE CAN GET ALONG!

L-LIKEWISE...

grsh

grsh

OH, YOU'RE SO CUUUTE!!

JUST LIKE A DOLL!!

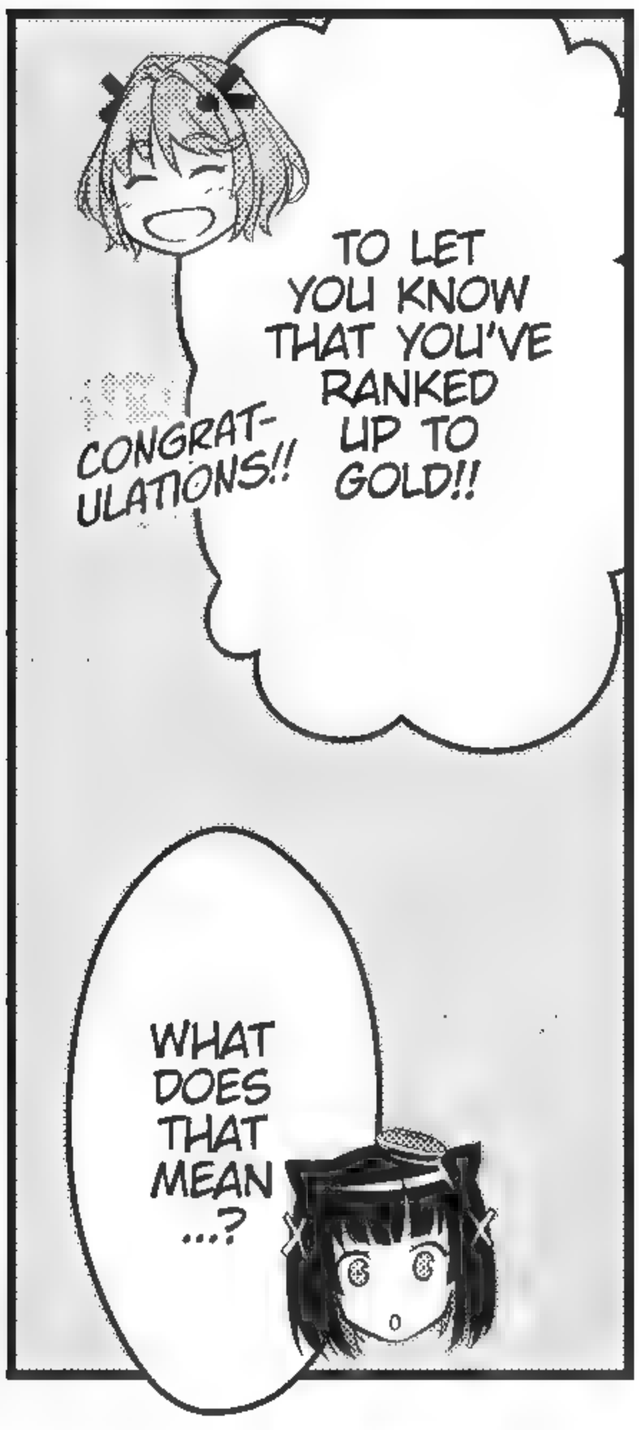
I KNOW YOU'RE EXCITED TO HAVE A GIRL YOUR AGE HERE, BUT TAKE IT EASY...

AND WHERE'S ELMA...?

Pon

IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE OF THIS.
bip

HER LEGS ARE SHAKING LIKE CRAZY...
WHAT'S WITH HER?
thudda thudda thudda thudda thudda


CONGRAT-ULATIONS!!
TO LET YOU KNOW THAT YOU'VE RANKED UP TO GOLD!!
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN ...?

Cptn.Hiro
MERCENARY GUILD
GOLD RANK
THE MERCENARY GUILD JUST SENT THIS MESSAGE...

I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE SUCH A HIGH-RANKING MERCENARY ...

OH, WOW...

Platinum
Beyond exceptional, very few exist

Gold
Even military and nobility respect them

Silver
Considered qualified mercenaries

Bronze
Beginners just getting started

Iron
Barely even considered newbies

YEAH, THE MERCENARY GUILD HAS THIS SYSTEM WHERE THEY ASSIGN RANKS BASED ON YOUR ABILITY LEVEL.

YOU CAN'T JUST CALL ME SILVER! THERE'RE ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE IN THAT RANK!!

WELL, ELMA'S SILVER, SO...

ERR, BUT WHY IS ELMA...?

SLAM!

WHA--?! MIMI!!

...

AND I'M ONE OF THOSE VETERANS WITH FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE!

SO I'LL THANK YOU TO NOT LUMP ME IN WITH THE REST OF THE SILVERS!

IT'S A HUGE GROUP, WITH EVERYONE FROM ROOKIES IN THEIR FIRST BATTLES TO SKILLED VETERANS.

HA HA HA HA HA!

C'MON NOW, EVEN IF YOU'RE A LOWER RANK, YOU'RE STILL MY MENTOR, *RIIIGHT?*

GRRRRR!

YOU JUST SHUT UP!!!

OSH

WHO-

SO BASICALLY, YOU'RE PISSED OFF THAT I JUMPED AHEAD OF YOU...

AH HA HA HA...

THEY SEEM... QUITE CLOSE?

BICKER

BICKER

BICKER

BICKER

BICKER

YOU WANNA FIGHT?! LET'S GO RIGHT NOW!

RIGHT, MISS *MENTOR?*

?

BETTER EXPLAIN CHRIS'S STORY TO THEM AS WELL...

GRRAAAHH

OH, RIGHT...

THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR FOOLING AROUND.

GL-

HUH!

UHH...

OHH, CHRI-

IISSS!

GOMP

WAAA

AHHH!

SHEESH, THIS IS TURNING INTO A SERIOUS CHORE...

FWIP

IT'S A HOLO-MESSAGE FOR COUNT DALENWALD.

I WANT IT SENT TO HIM VIA MULTIPLE ROUTES.

SPEAKING OF CHORES, I'VE GOT ONE FOR YOU.

shf shf

YEAH. I'LL HANDLE THE COST.

AH, SO YOU WANT TO USE MY CONTACT NETWORK TO SEND OTHER COPIES.

WE SENT IT FROM THE PORT AUTHORITY, BUT CHRIS'S UNCLE MIGHT TRY TO INTERCEPT IT.

UH-HUH, SURE THING.

NOT REALLY. IT'S JUST SOMETHING TO MAKE THE COUNT GRATEFUL... AND GUARANTEE OUR PAYDAY.

squeeeeeeeeeze

OH, HOW *GENEROUS* OF YOU.

MMMPPHH!!

THEY COULD TRY TO POISON OUR FOOD WHEN WE RESUPPLY ...

OR PLANT A BOMB IN SOME-THING...

NOT NECES-SARILY.

SO, NOW THAT WE'VE MADE THE FIRST MOVE, WE'LL SEE WHAT HER UNCLE TRIES.

IF WE JUST STAY TUCKED AWAY IN HERE, WE SHOULD BE SAFE...

IT'S PROBABLY SAFER TO GET OUR SUPPLIES FROM PIRATE PLUNDER.

KIND OF IRONIC.

THEY'D REALLY GO THAT FAR...?

I WOULDN'T BE SUR-PRISED.

I'LL TRY ALL MY CONTACTS.

SHWIP

ANYWAY, FIRST THINGS FIRST.

I KNOW, I KNOW.

KSSHT

JUST BE CAREFUL.

HER UNCLE'S PROBABLY ALREADY ON TO US.

HAAHH!

MIMI.

SO, FIRST IS...

COULD YOU SHOW CHRIS AROUND THE SHIP?

Haa!

Haa!

Haa!

Haa!

YES, OF COURSE!

THUMP

WELL...

WHAT TO DO NOW?

AND I WANNA AVOID HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT.

I'M HARDLY A TRAINED STRATEGIST OR ASSASSIN.

IF POSSIBLE, I WANT TO FIGHT WHERE I'M BEST...

IN SPACE, ABOARD KRISHNA...

HRR...MMM...oo

THE QUESTION IS, HOW CAN I GET THE ENEMY...

TO COME OUT AND FACE ME THERE?

MIMI'S TABLET...

CIERRA SYSTEM
RESORT TOURS
SPECIAL ISSUE
VHIP
- Tour all of the best nature spots in the system!!
- You'll be accompanied by the top local guides!!
- An all-inclusive interplanetary cruise is also available!!
MUST-KNOW INFO
SO THAT'S WHAT SHE'S BEEN RESEARCH-ING...

GRIN

MAYBE WE CAN TAKE THE OPPOSITE APPROACH...

AND *FORCE* THEM TO PURSUE US.

WE'RE BACK!

HUH?

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THAT AD?

kssssht

I SHOWED HER ALL THE MOST IMPORTANT AREAS...

RIGHT NOW? *ERR...* WHICH ONE?

GET US ON ONE OF THESE TOURS ASAP.

WHAT?

SURELY WE CAN'T BE VACA-TIONING RIGHT NOW...

WE SURE CAN.

ALL OF 'EM.

WWSH

SPLIT THE TOUR ACROSS SEVERAL DIFFERENT TRAVEL AGENCIES.

BOOK US AS MANY AS YOU CAN.

A-ALL OF THEM?!

YUP. EVERY SINGLE PLANET.

HOW'S IT GOING ON YOUR END?

PERFECT TIMING.

OH, IT'S ELMA.

Fwip

beep

UMM... WHAT'S GOING ON?

WELL...

bi- bip

BUT?

BUT...

I'VE TALKED TO ALL MY CONTACTS AND ASKED THEM TO DO WHATEVER THEY CAN.

I'M BEING FOLLOWED.

PHEW...

I'M BEAT...

THE ONES FOLLOWING ME SURE MOVED...

thak

I'M BACK.

LOOM

FAST?

WHY'D YOU DODGE?

I WAS JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU...

jump

WH- WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING?!!

WHOOSH!

FOR SOMEONE SO BOLD, YOU SURE DO WORRY ABOUT SILLY THINGS...

URK...

NO NEED TO MAKE A FUSS.

I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE THEY'RE GONNA ATTACK ME IN BROAD DAYLIGHT.

REALLY?

JEEZ.

shup

WELL?

DID THAT HELP YOU RELAX...

JOLT

WHA--?!

fwsh

GASP

LITTLE BUDDY?

Y-
YOU...

SHUDDUP!

GOOD TO KNOW!

HEH HEH! SO YOU DO HAVE A CUTE SIDE, CAPTAIN!

AAANY-WAY!!

FORGET THAT! WE'RE HAVING A STRATEGY MEETING!!
NO TIME TO DAWDLE AROUND!
.....

RIGHT NOW, THE ENEMY IS HOT ON OUR TAIL.

ELMA'S RUN-IN JUST NOW CONFIRMED THAT.

SO WHY DID YOU WANT ME TO BOOK ALL OF THOSE VACATION TOURS?

THE ENEMY'S PROBABLY WAITING TO AMBUSH US AS WE TRAVEL TO A PLANET.

Colony

Will probably attack around here

Resort Planets

SO, WE'LL MAKE RESERVATIONS AT EVERY SINGLE PLACE WE CAN, AND MAKE OURSELVES STAND OUT EVEN FURTHER.

SO HERE'S WHAT I'M THINKING.

WITH *KRISHNA*, WE SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE DOING THAT.

THEN, WE'LL ENGAGE AND WIPE THEM ALL OUT ALONG THE WAY.

WE'LL BE ABLE TO BUY MORE TIME SINCE THE ENEMY WILL HAVE TO SEARCH EVERY PLACE WE GO.

AFTER THAT, WE'LL CONTINUE TO LAND ON THE PLANETS WHEREVER WE STAY.

GRIN

TO KEEP COUNT DALENWALD INFORMED.

MEANWHILE, WE'LL USE ELMA'S CONTACTS...

UMM...

.....

WELL, IF I HAD A NORMAL SENSE FOR MONEY, MY EYES WOULD BE POPPING OUT RIGHT NOW...

I HAVE 17,000,000 ENER RIGHT NOW, SO IT'S IN THE BUDGET.

THIS MIGHT BE A NAIVE QUESTION, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE COST OF THIS PLAN?

BASED ON THE AD HERE, IT SHOULD BE FINE.

PERHAPS I'M MISSING SOMETHING, BUT COULD WE NOT SIMPLY MAKE OUR WAY TOWARD MY GRANDFATHER?

ERM...

I SEE...

BESIDES, WE CAN JUST PASS ON THE EXPENDITURES TO THE COUNT AFTERWARD.

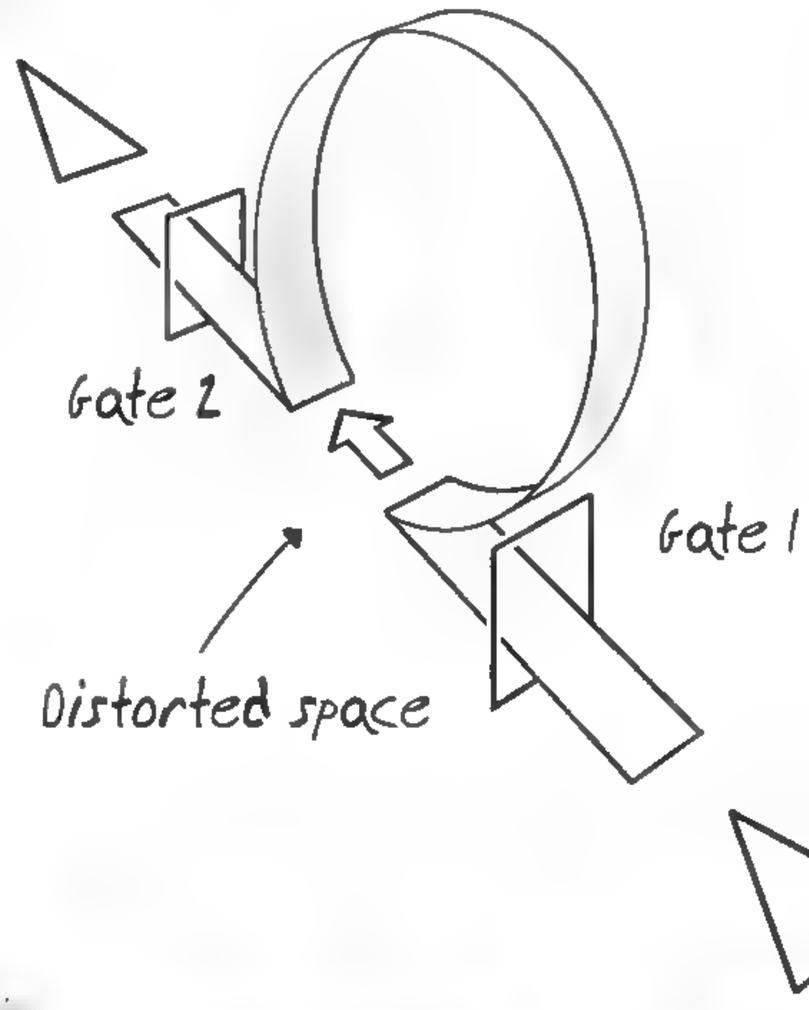
THAT'D BE TOUGH.

SAME DEAL WITH THE HYPERLANES. NOT TO MENTION THE ISSUE OF RESUPPLYING.

WE'D NEED PERMISSION FROM AN IMPERIAL NOBLE TO USE A GATEWAY, AND EVEN IF WE GOT THAT, YOUR UNCLE MIGHT HAVE A TRAP SET.

BASICALLY, THEY DISTORT THE SPACE IN BETWEEN AND CREATE A HOLE TO ENTER THROUGH... I DON'T UNDER-STAND MUCH BEYOND THAT.

THEY'RE MOST USEFUL WHEN TRAVELING HUGE DISTANCES, LIKE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF LIGHT YEARS.



BY THE WAY, A GATEWAY IS SOMETHING THAT LINKS TWO "GATES" IN SPACE, ALLOWING ONE TO WARP BETWEEN THEM.

THEY TAKE LONGER THAN GATEWAYS, BUT WITH THEIR EVER-EXPANDING NETWORK...

THEY'RE IDEAL FOR MEDIUM TO LONG DISTANCES.

HYPERLANES ARE LIKE SPACE HIGHWAYS, ALLOWING YOU TO MOVE THROUGH HYPERSPACE AT INCREDIBLE SPEEDS.

WE CAN'T ESCAPE ENEMY SURVEILLANCE IF WE'RE AT THE COLONY.

SO THE SOONER WE LURE AND WIPE THEM OUT, THE BETTER.

IT'S NOT BAD.

SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY PLAN?

WE CAN'T BE SURE IF SOMETHING MIGHT GET SMUGGLED IN.

THE ONLY ISSUE THEN IS RESUPPLYING. NOT JUST FROM THE COLONY, BUT WHILE IN THIS SYSTEM...

THEY'VE GOT ANYTHING FROM BATTERIES OF LASER CANNONS TO AUTONOMOUS GUARD ROBOTS TO PROTECT THEIR GUESTS.

WHAT? SERI-OUSLY?

HONESTLY, HIDING OUT ON A RESORT PLANET WOULD PROBABLY BE SAFEST.

THE PLANETS HAVE ULTRA-PROTECTIVE POSITRON AIS MANAGING EVERYTHING.

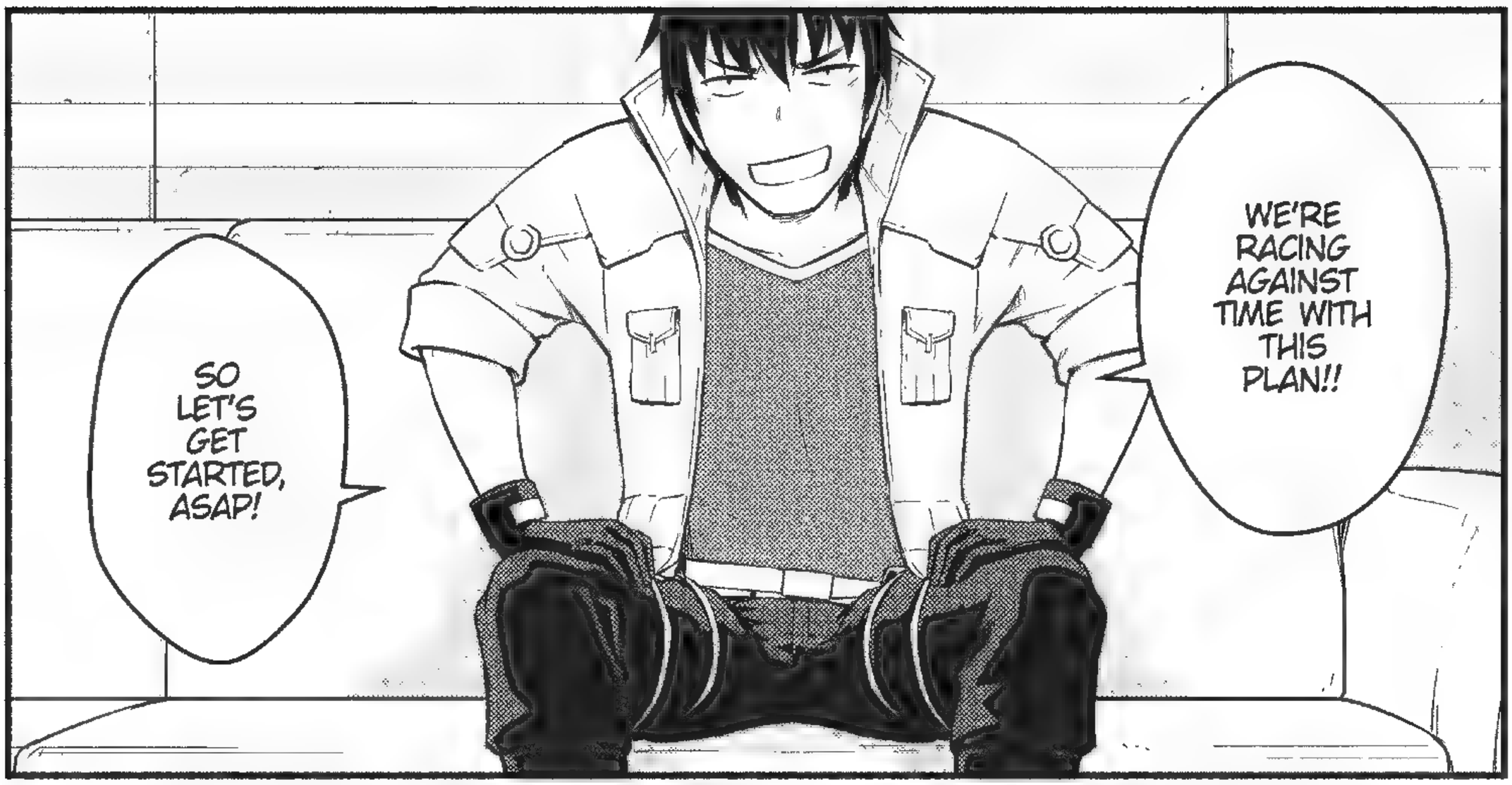
SMAA-

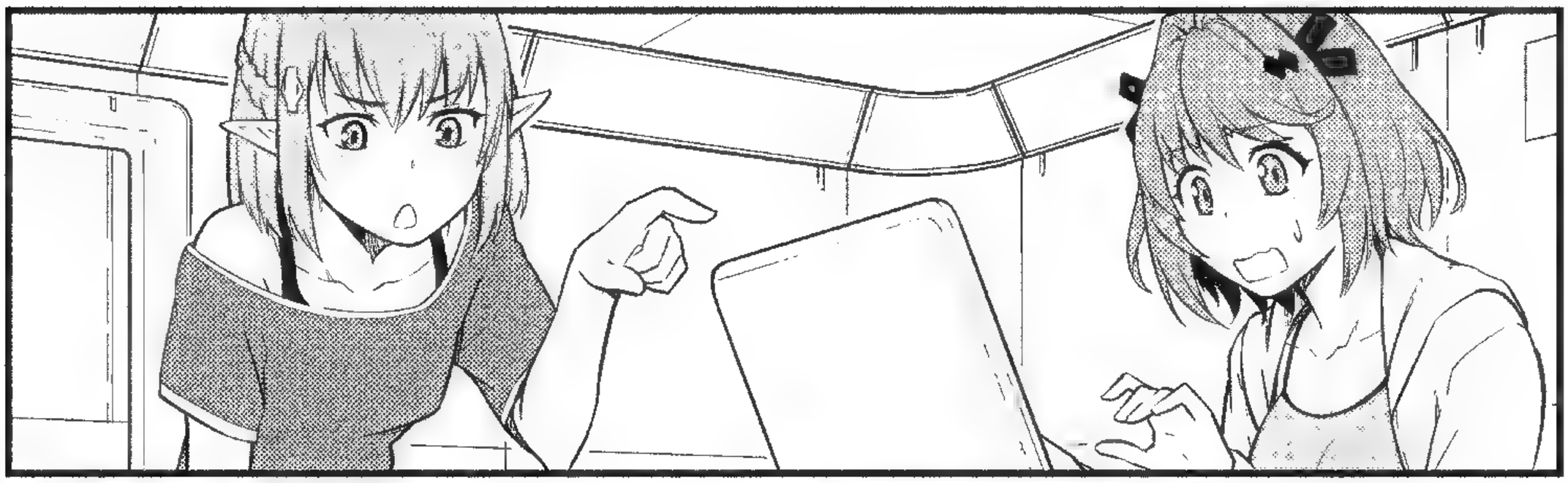
ALL RIGHT!

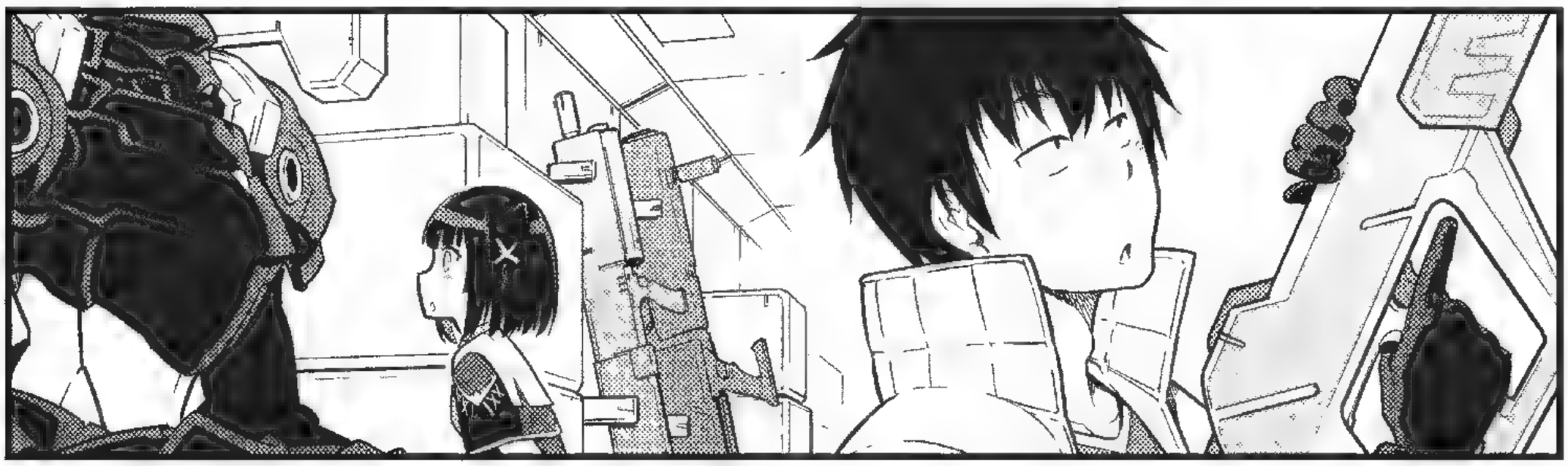
ACK!

I GUESS SO?

THESE TOP-TIER RESORTS HAVE NOBLES AND VARIOUS VIPS FOR GUESTS, SO ALL THAT IS PRETTY STANDARD TO PROTECT THE EMPIRE'S IMAGE, DON'TCHA THINK?


SO LET'S GET STARTED, ASAP!
WE'RE RACING AGAINST TIME WITH THIS PLAN!!





HOW'S OUR PROGRESS?

I HAD TROUBLE PAYING BECAUSE MY HANDS WERE SHAKING...

WE'VE GOT A TWO-WEEK RESERVATION, AND IT'LL COST TWO MILLION ENER.

AS YOU CAN GUESS, IT'S LARGELY OCEAN, WITH MANY SMALL ISLANDS DOTTED ALL AROUND.

SO, WE RESERVED ONE OF THESE ISLANDS IN ITS ENTIRETY.

AND WHAT'S THE PLACE LIKE?

IT'S A WATER PLANET CALLED CIERRA III.

A WHOLE ISLAND TO OURSELVES... GUESS THAT'S A DELUXE PACKAGE FOR YOU...

WHEN DO WE LEAVE?

R-RIGHT...

WE CAN GO SWIMMING, EXPLORE THE ISLAND, PLAY WITH THE LOCAL CREATURES...

AND! AND EAT FRESH SEAFOOD AND OTHER NON-SYNTHESIZED FOOD!!

UHH, REALLY?

WHAT?

THE DAY AFTER TOMOR-ROW.

SO WHAT DO WE DO UNTIL THEN?

WE CAN'T RESUPPLY TILL WE LEAVE HERE, AND WE CAN'T GO OUTSIDE.

SO WHAT?

BEER PREMIUM

IT'S BARELY NOON, AND YOU'RE ALREADY DRINKING?

WANT SOME?

YES, PLEASE.

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...

WHAT IS THAT?

.....

Coke New

THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT, RIGHT?

HERE.

SIP

SIP

NOT-TO MENTION— THE JUNK FOOD...

I SEE!

BEER

DON'T YOU GO GIVING A NOBLE GIRL YOUR WEIRD DRINK.

AND IT'S VERY SWEET.

IT TASTES SOMEWHAT MEDICINAL ...

THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT PERFECT TO GO WITH PIZZA, HAMBURGERS, AND STUFF LIKE THAT.

DON'T COME CRYING TO ME IF THE COUNT GETS MAD ABOUT YOU BEING A BAD ROLE MODEL.

WHADDYA MEAN "WEIRD DRINK"?

BEER PREMIUM

DRESSED LIKE THAT WHILE DAY-DRINKING...

HMPH.

AND WHO'RE YOU TO LECTURE ME ABOUT BEING A BAD ROLE MODEL?

.....

YOU WANNA GO?!

YOU WANNA GO?

BUT YOU ARE JUST AS CLOSE WITH CAPTAIN HIRO, NO?

HEE HEE.

THEY GET ALONG QUITE WELL, I SEE.

bicker bicker

THEY REALLY DO. I ENVY IT, SOMETIMES.

GU-

LP

WELL, EXCUSE ME FOR NOT BEING MORE "HONEST"!

SERIOUSLY, THOUGH...

TEE HEE HEE! THAT'S RIGHT...

I'M GLAD MIMI'S ALWAYS SO HONEST.

SPPFFFFTT

SIGH...

YOU'RE MUCH MORE HONEST AT NIGHT...

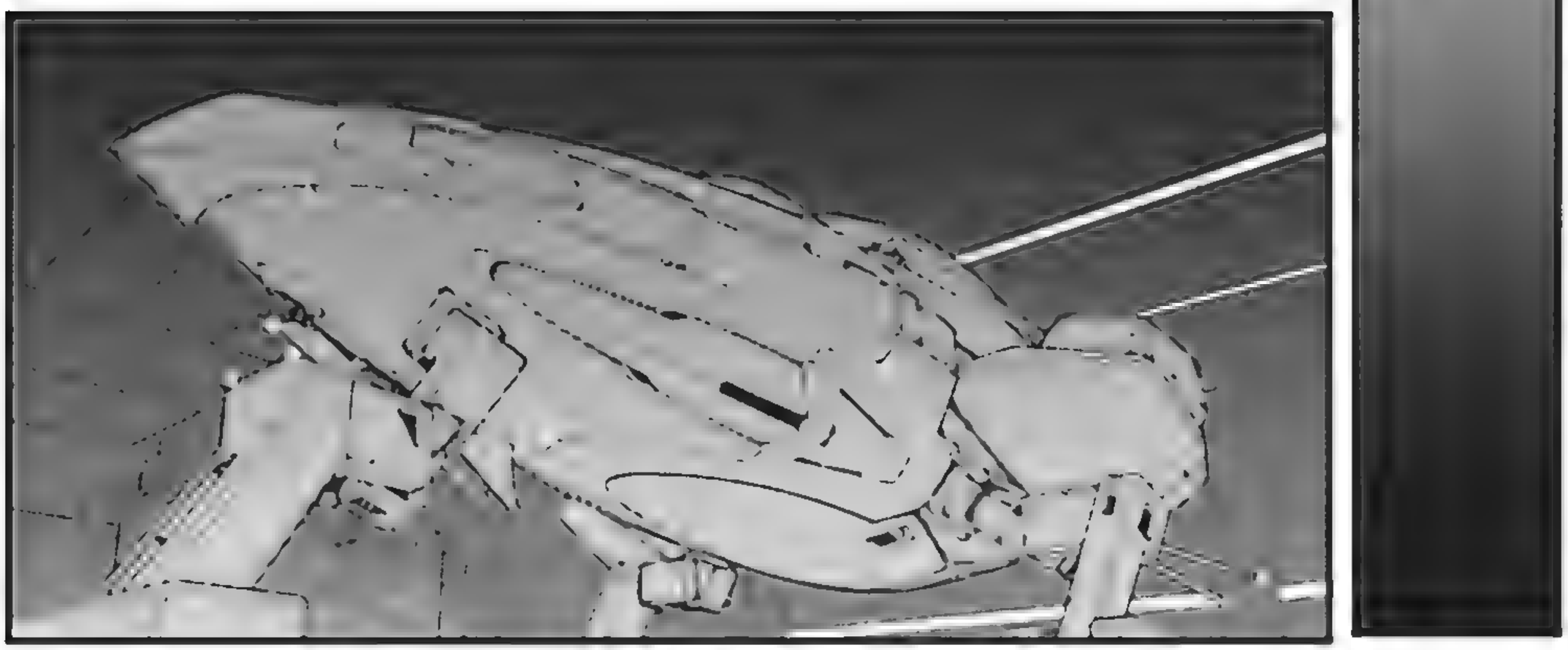
MAY I SPEAK TO YOU IN PRIVATE?

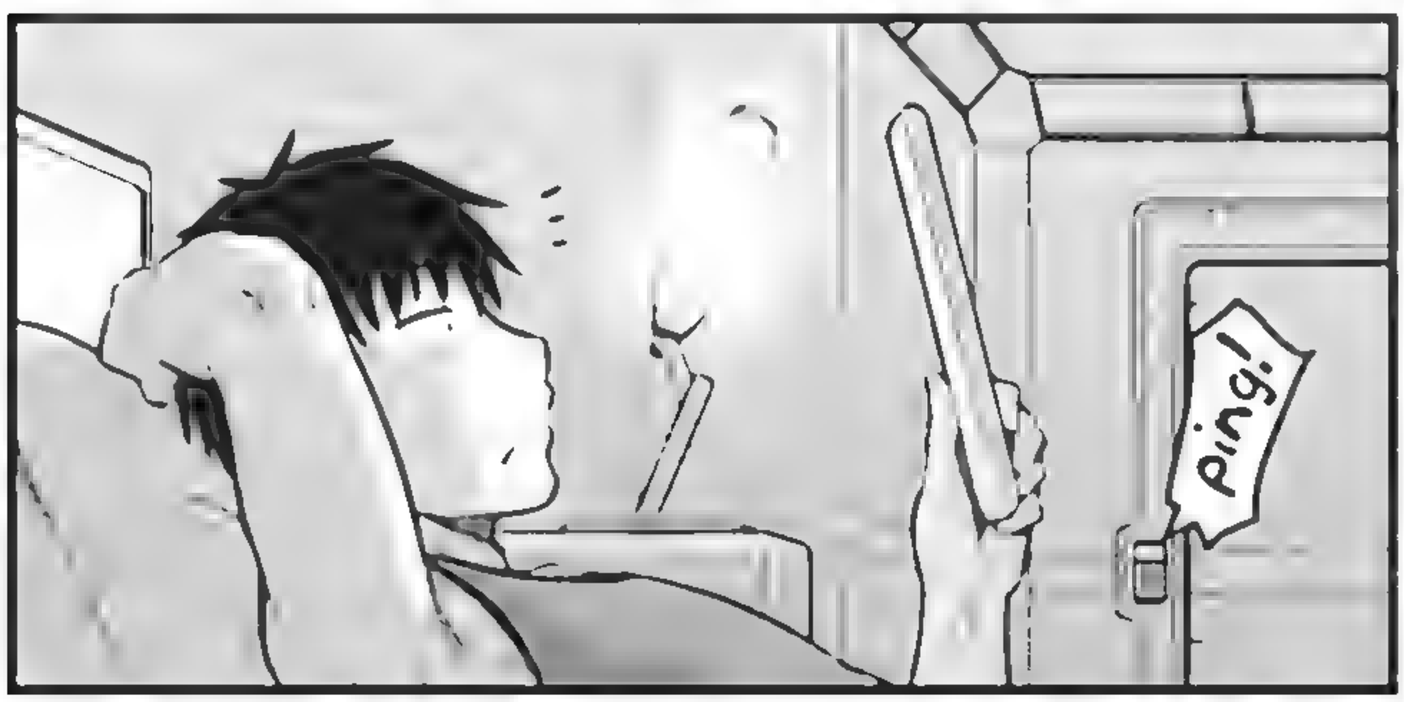
ERR, MIMI...

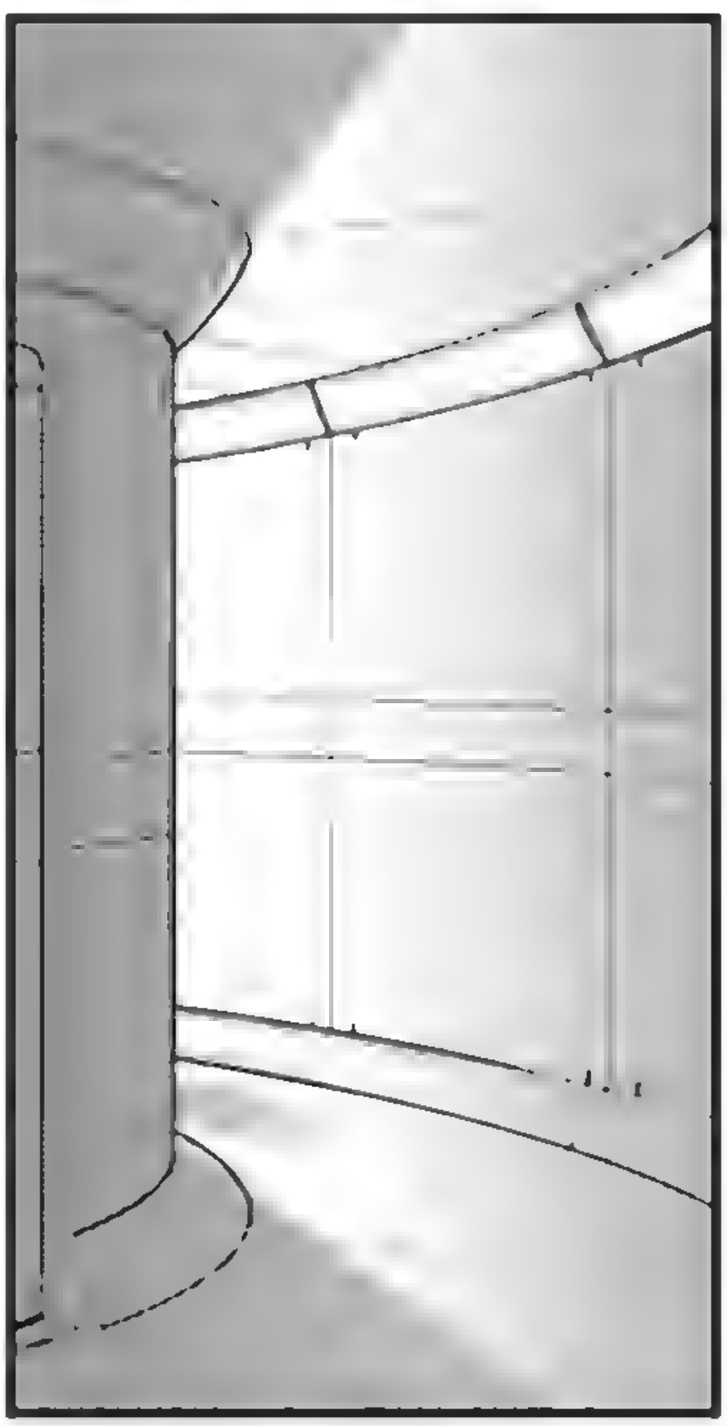
Ah ha ha...

WHA--?!

YOU CAN'T TALK LIKE THAT AROUND CHRIS!




ping!



beep
ELMA, MAYBE?
beep
WHO'S UP SO LATE?

YOU GOTTA HOLD OFF ON THIS KINDA...
HUH?
KSH-
LOOK, AT LEAST WHILE CHRIS IS HERE...
HHT

ERM...

Fidget

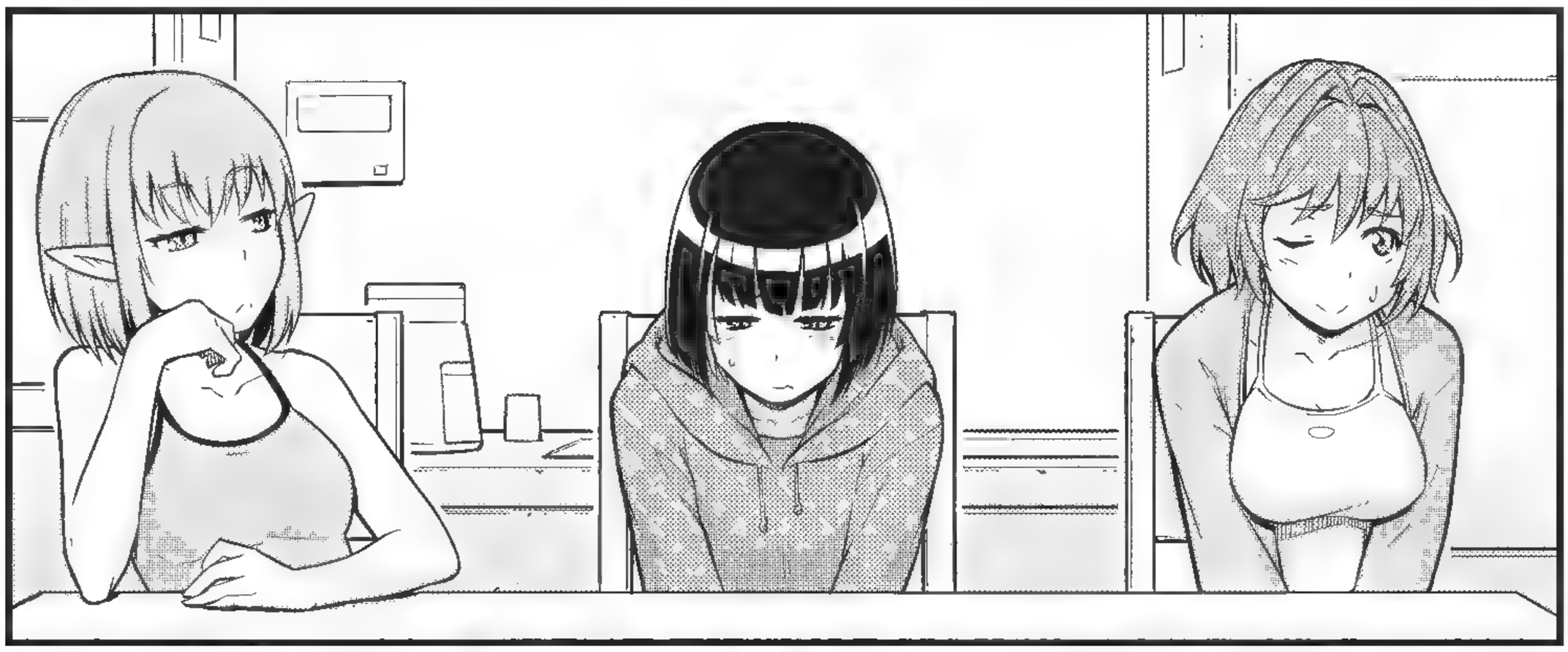
PLEASE DO BE GENTLE WITH ME...

Fidget

OOOHHH!

TWITCH

TH-THIS IS MY FIRST TIME...



I'M SORRY...
WILT
I'M JUST ASKING YOU TO USE YOUR HEAD.

I DUNNO WHAT THE HECK YOU TOLD CHRIS...
BUT OBVIOUSLY, I'M NOT GONNA SLEEP WITH HER.

JOLT
MIMI.
YESH?!

CHRIS IS CURRENTLY OUR JOB, RIGHT?

IT'S ABSURD TO THINK THAT I'D SLEEP WITH HER.

BESIDES, SHE'S A NOBLE'S DAUGHTER. WERE I IN COUNT GRANDPA'S SHOES, I'D KILL ANY MERC THAT TRIED TO GET WITH HER.

?

TO LEAVE...

AND CHRIS, I DUNNO WHAT SHE SAID, BUT YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE HER SERIOUSLY.

.....

DUN

SEEMS UNJUST!

TO LEAVE ONLY ME OUT OF YOUR CIRCLE...

THERE'S NOTHING "UNJUST" ABOUT IT.

LIKE I SAID, YOU AND YOUR PROTECTION ARE OUR *JOB* RIGHT NOW.

OKAY, LOOK...

BESIDES, I'LL STILL PROTECT YOU REGARD-LESS...

IT WAS HONESTLY A MIRACLE THAT WE FOUND YOU OUT THERE.

AND GIVEN THAT, I'D UNDERSTAND IF THE SUSPENSION BRIDGE EFFECT WAS GETTING YOU EXCITED, BUT YOU GOTTA CALM DOWN.

DUNNO.

look

BUT I...

CHRIS...

tff

YOU WOULDN'T WANT YOUR GRANDFATHER AND ME GETTING INTO AN ARGUMENT, RIGHT?

THAT WOULD NOT--!

CLATTER

ESPECIALLY IF THAT ARGUMENT WAS CAUSED BY A FLEETING EMOTION...

YES, I WOULD ...

WOULDN'T YOU BE BOTHER-ED?

YOUR GRAND-FATHER'S A PROUD NOBLE, RIGHT?

THERE'S A LOGIC BEHIND EVERY-THING.

THEN NO MORE OF THIS STUFF, GOT IT? ACT LIKE THE NOBLE YOU ARE.

DON'T YOU THINK HE'D HATE FOR YOU TO DO SOMETHING ILLOGICAL?

YES, I DO...

PAT

?

.....

I WILL.

THANKS, CHRIS.

LET'S JUST KEEP IT LIGHTHEARTED AND FRIENDLY, YEAH?

YOU'RE A SMART GIRL.

AGREED.

AND MAKE SURE YOU WATCH OUT FOR HER, TOO.

YEAH, GOT IT.

YOU TALKED YOUR WAY OUT OF THAT PRETTY WELL.

HOW RUDE... I DID ALL THAT FOR HER SAKE.

IS THIS THE NORM FOR NOBLES IN THIS UNIVERSE?

WAY TOO YOUNG...

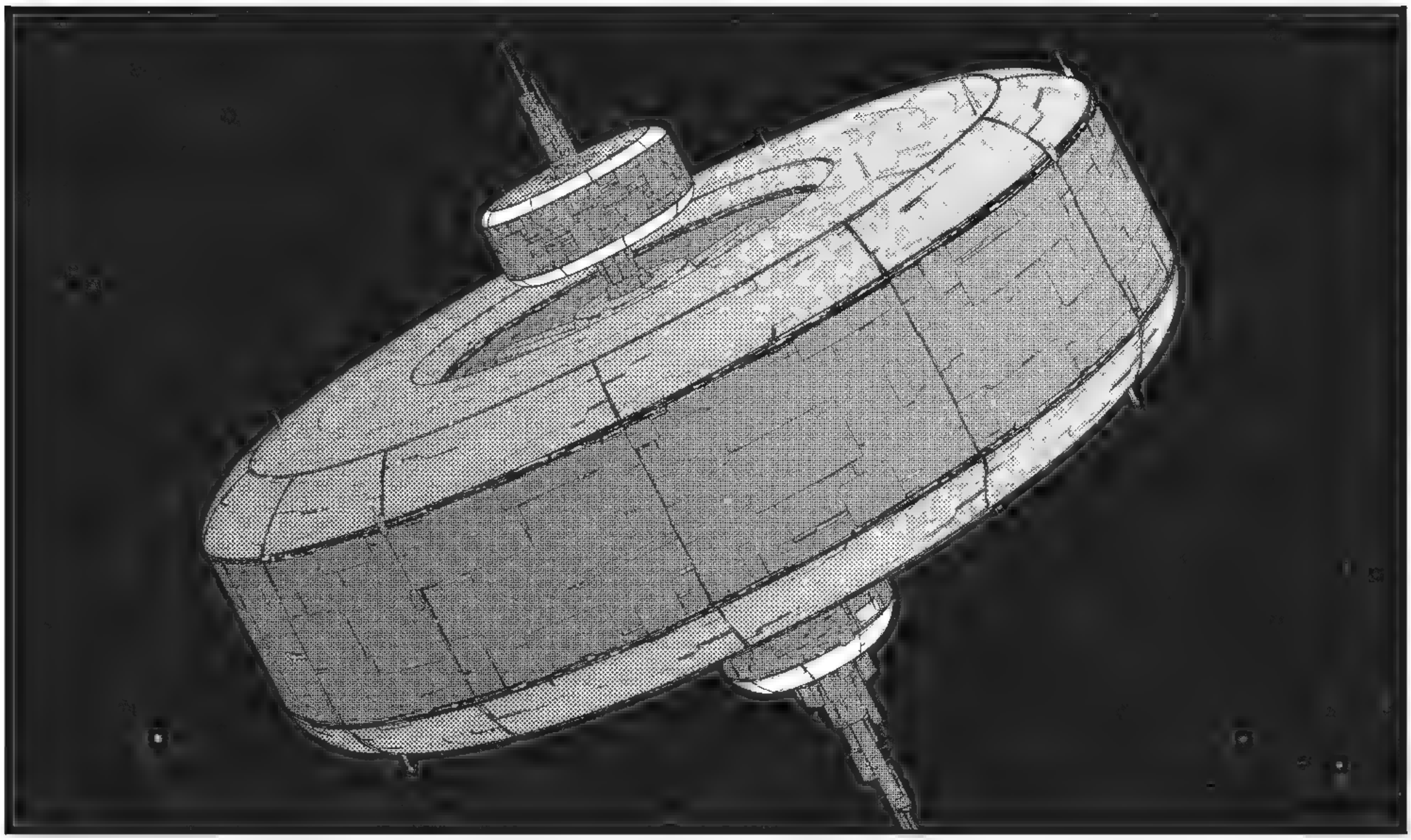
THAT WAS A PRETTY BOLD MOVE, GIVEN HER AGE...

WHAT?!

NO WAY!

OH, AND NIGHTTIME STUFF IS ALSO OFF THE TABLE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW.

FOR CHRIS'S SAKE.



vwrm

vwrm

vwrm

vwrm

AM I ALLOWED TO BE IN THE COCKPIT?

YUP. BEST PLACE TO BE SINCE THE INERTIA DAMPENING IS STRONGEST HERE.

THE SUB-OPERATOR'S SEAT'LL BE SAFEST FOR YOU.

WE'VE RECEIVED PERMISSION TO TAKE OFF.

IT'S COMPLICATED TO THROW OFF OUR TAIL, SO BE CAREFUL.

ROUTE TO THE PLANET IS SET.

ROGER.

PLOP

UNTIL WE'RE LANDED ON CIERRA III, WE GOTTA STAY SUPER CAUTIOUS.

BE READY FOR ANYTHING.

ACTIVATING FTL DRIVE!

VWEEE-

EEEM

LET'S HIT FTL.

KLOOM!!

I WONDER WHERE THEY'LL TRY TO ATTACK...

THEY'LL PROBABLY GIVE US A BIT OF SPACE AND THEN TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHICH PLANET WE'RE...

WELL, WE'RE GONNA TURN THE TABLES REAL QUICK...

HUH, THAT WAS FAST.

WE'RE GOIN' IN!!

VWOOSH!

WH-WHAT SHOULD I DO?

?

ELMA! READY ALL OUR AMMO, AND DON'T HOLD BACK!

MIMI, PUT US IN BATTLE MODE!

AND TRY NOT TO BITE YOUR TONGUE.

むぐ MMPHH

YOU JUST STAY RIGHT THERE...

WHOA THERE!

ｲｽﾝ

OOM!

GOT IT.

ENEMY COUNT COMPLETE! TWELVE SMALL AND FOUR MIDSIZE SHIPS!

NO WARNING SHOTS, EH?

Chapter 25

TIME FOR THE HUNTED TO BECOME THE HUNTERS...

VHOO-

OOOSH!

AND WE'RE NOT TAKING ANY PRISONERS!!

BSHUUN

BTSUUN

TSOOM

TSOOM

SHOOM

.....

EEK!!

THEY HAVE PRETTY HIGH ATTENUATION SHIELDS.

THOSE DON'T LOOK LIKE PIRATE SHIPS...

DEFINITELY MILITARY SPECS.

THOUGH OBSOLETE.

ZKRNN!

VZZZZ

TYOOM!

A SINGLE LASER SHOT WON'T BE ENOUGH FOR THEIR SHIELDS.

THAT WOULD'VE BEEN A ONE-HIT ON ANY OTHER PIRATE SHIP.

THESE GUYS ARE TOUGH.

HMM... ALL RIGHT.

YEAH, THAT FIGURES.

.....

I CAN'T! WE'RE BEING JAMMED!!

MIMI, DID YOU GET THROUGH TO THE IMPERIAL FLEET?

SO IT'S TIME TO STOP WATCHING...

CLENCH

WELL, I HAVE A GOOD SENSE OF THEIR FIGHTING ABILITIES NOW.

AND GET IN THERE!!

DOOSH!

VAA-

IN THAT CASE...

WHAT'S THE PLAN? YOU BETTER HIT HARD IF YOU WANNA HAVE ANY EFFECT.

BETSUUN

TSEWH

VWOO-OOOOSH!

TSYOOM

IF I GOTTA HIT 'EM HARD...

BRR-ZHOOM

THEN I'LL HIT 'EM WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT.

BOOM!

THEY'RE BREAKING FORMATION NOW.

VWOOSH

NOW'S OUR CHANCE.

LOOKS LIKE YOUR SUDDEN ATTACK THREW THEM OFF.

VWEEEEEM

LET'S TAKE OUT THAT MIDSIZER FIRST!!!

VRRRNN...

JOLT

CAPTAIN! ALL SHOTS DEFLECTED!!

BISUCUZ

BISUCUZ

2ECE8

TVOOM!

WE'RE STILL GOIN' IN!!

WHOOSH

OOSH

MUST HAVE SHIELD CELLS, TOO...

THE MIDSIZE ONES ARE EVEN TOUGHER, HUH...?

BUT...

TSEW

TSEW

TSEW

THOOM

SEE HOW YOU LIKE THIS.

BROOOSH!

HOW'S THAT?

BOOM!

I KNOW FLAK CANNONS ARE MOST EFFECTIVE AT POINT-BLANK RANGE...

BUT YOU REALLY ARE CRAZY...

HUH?

WE'LL USE IT AS A SHIELD.

SWOOSH

LET'S STICK BEHIND THIS GUY FOR NOW.

AND THEY'LL HOLD BACK TO AVOID FRIENDLY FIRE.

BREAK THE LINE OF SIGHT WITH THE SMALL SHIPS...

ON TO THE NEXT SHIP!

VWOOSH

SWOOSH

FWIP

TALK ABOUT FIGHTING DIRTY...

THIS IS WHAT IT TAKES WHEN OUTNUM-BERED.

VWOO-

THEY WANNA DRAG US AWAY FROM THE MIDSIZE SHIPS THAT BAD, HUH?

OOOSH

WE HAVE SMALL SHIPS RIGHT ON OUR TAIL!

bi-bip!

FWISHT

NICE TRY.

FWOOM

DA-RÒOOSH

THOOM

WELL, I'VE GOT A GOOD FEEL FOR HOW THEY MOVE BY NOW.

I'VE PRACTICED A LOT.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE TAILING THEIR SHIP *IN REVERSE* WHILE FIGHTING BEHIND YOU...

THIS TRAJECTORY IS ABSURD.

MORE ENEMIES FROM BEHIND US!

GOOD OL' DAYS...

I WORKED CRAZY HARD TO LEARN THIS TECHNIQUE FROM A FRIEND BACK IN SOL.

BTSUU-

UUUN

GOT IT.

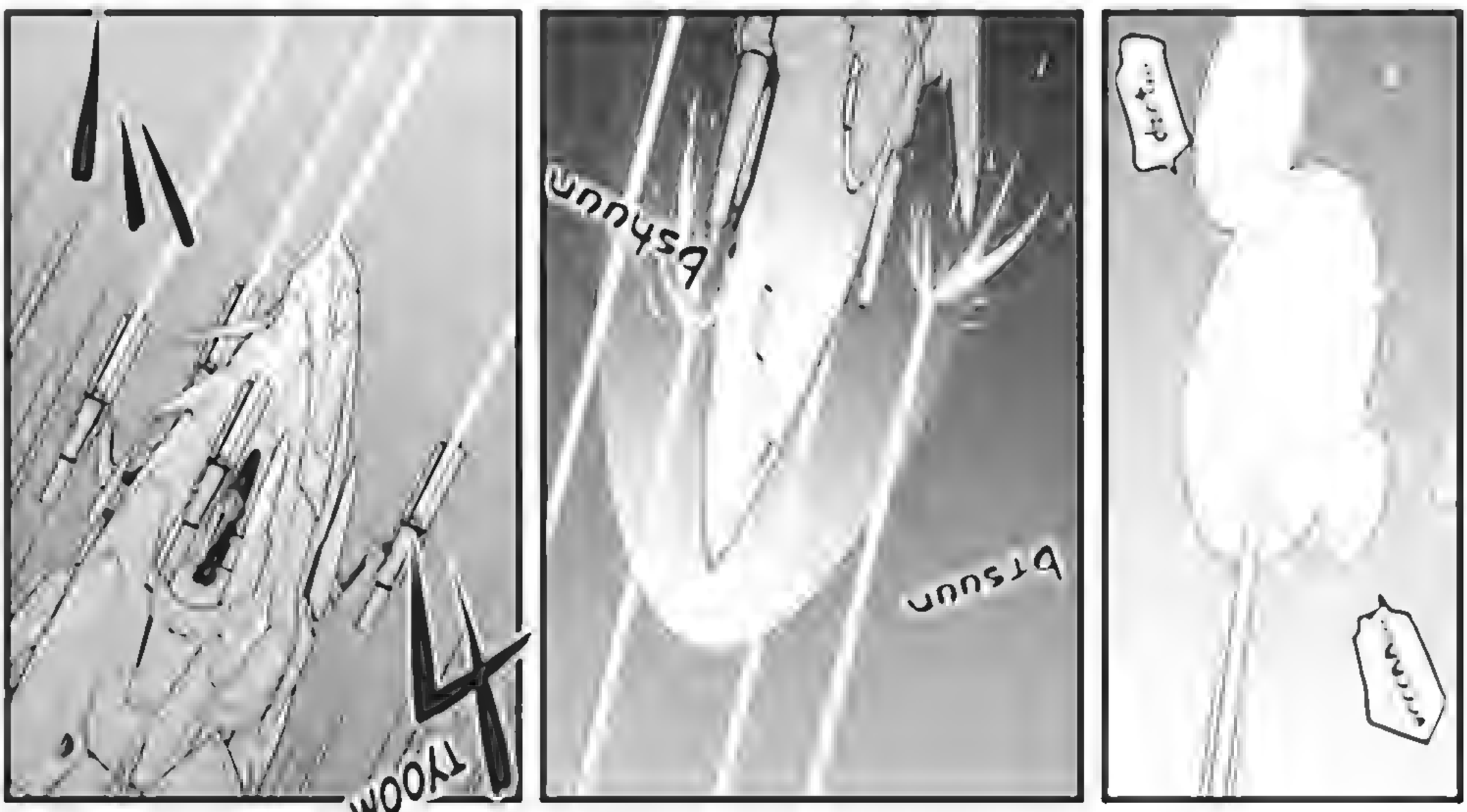
TYOOM

WELL, THEN...

OH NO, ANOTHER DEFLECTION ...

boom

WOOHSA


TYOOM
bTSUUN
bTSUUN

YOU MAKE IT SOUND SO EASY.

I'M AMAZED YOU CAN ACTUALLY HIT THEM WHILE MANEUVER-ING LIKE THIS...

JUST GOTTA KEEP THE LASERS GOING UNTIL THEIR SHIELDS ARE SATURATED.

THE REMAINING SHIPS HAVE REORGANIZED AND ARE HEADING FOR US!

AHA.

CAPTAIN!!

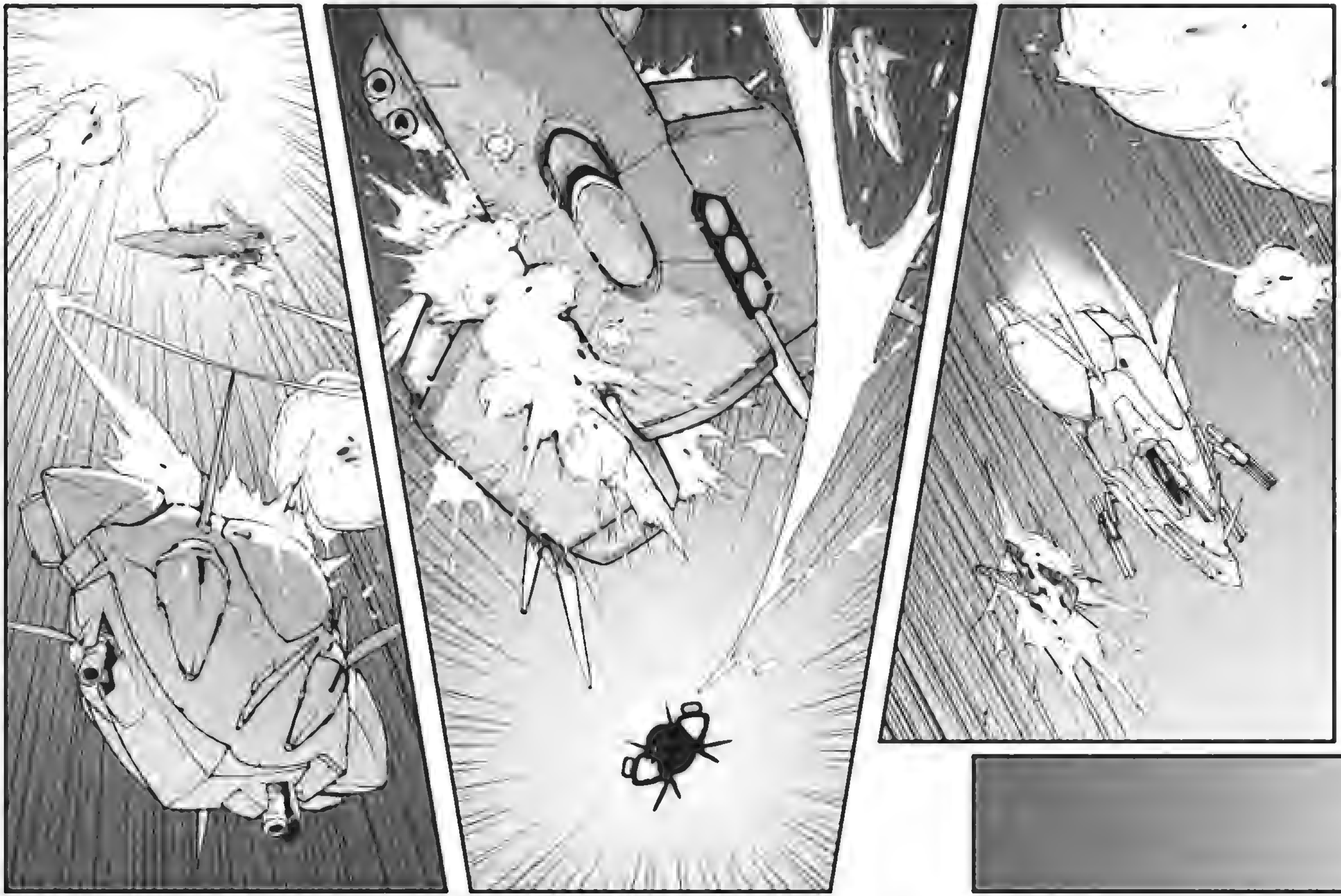
VWOO-

OOSH

ONE LAST PUSH TO TAKE 'EM ALL DOWN!

ALL RIGHT...

clench



UH-HUH...

THAT WAS A TOUGH BATTLE.

THEY REALLY WERE WAY STRONGER THAN THE PIRATES.

WAS IT REALLY?

IN-TENSE...

clunk

WELL, THAT'S PART ONE OF OUR PLAN COMPLETED SUCCESS-FULLY.

YEAH, LET'S JUST QUICKLY GRAB THE MOST ACCESSIBLE CARGO, THEN HEAD FOR THE PLANET.

CHRIS...

IT'S OKAY NOW...

sketch

SO, THAT'S THE SKY... IT'S SO STRANGE TO THINK THERE'S NO CEILING UP THERE!

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE SPACIOUSNESS OF BEING PLANETSIDE.

OH, WOW...

VWIR

VWIR

WHOA, WHAT THE--?!

JOLT

MMM, THE AIR TASTES GREAT!

AT LEAST, I THINK SO...

Hello, and welcome.

HM?

I shall act as host during your stay on this planet.

Welcome, Mr. Hiro and party.

I am Milo, Cierra III's manage-ment AI.

Please follow me to your lodgings.

UH, LIKE-WISE?

THANKS...

BOW

Please enjoy your time here.

CAPTAIN!!

I am pleased you think so.

WOW, IT'S BIG AND FANCY.

KINDA JUSTI-FIES THE COST.

LOOK AT THIS!!

THERE ARE SO MANY PLANTS!!

POINT

.....

DOESN'T FEEL FAKE.

WHAT?!

IT'S NOT PLASTIC?

YOU'RE RIGHT, THIS *IS* FANCY... IS IT ALL WOOD?

I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY!

SO THIS IS WHAT NATURE IS LIKE...

GUESS IT'S NOT SUPER-EFFICIENT TO GROW TREES ON A COLONY.

WHAT'S THIS?

SO WOOD'S A PRECIOUS RESOURCE HERE, TOO...

I can arrange for your lunch to be prepared at that time.

In one hour, it will be noon.

Forgive the interrup-tion.

YEAH, I'M STARTING TO GET HUNGRY.

Shall I do so?

SURE, GO AHEAD.

I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN MIMI!

CAPTAIN, MAY I GO EXPLORE UNTIL THEN?

Yes, sir.

As you wish.

SURE, WE'LL EAT AT NOON.

OOH, GOOD IDEA! I'LL HAVE--

MILO!!

Please do relax until lunchtime.

Shall I bring any drinks while you wait?

WHAT THE HECK? DON'T DO THAT...

CARBONATED DRINKS?

DO YOU HAVE ANY...

GOTCHA ...

SLUMP

SHOULDA KNOWN...

MY SINCERE APOLOGIES.

Yes.

Although, none are currently stocked in your lodge.

.....

YOU SAID NONE ARE STOCKED, SO CAN I ORDER SOME?

Yes.

It will take some time, but it can be arranged.

VWSH

HUH? NONE STOCK-ED?

Uncarbonated drinks, however, are freely available.

THE BLACK!

SWEET!

AND RE-FRESHING STUFF!

YELL!!

What flavor of dri--

I NEED COLA!!!

slap!!

Yes, sir.

I have already begun the arrangements. Please wait for a moment.

As you wish.

squeeeze

GIMME SOME, ASAP!

COLA WILL ENDURE LONG AFTER THE WORLD HAS ENDED!!

THOUGH IT DOES MAKE YOUR PEE SPARKLE!!

WHY'RE YOU GETTING SO WORKED UP?

IS THAT RIGHT?

COLA IS UNDYING!!

OF COURSE IT EXISTS!!

fwip

I ASSUMED IT WAS JUST YOUR FANTASY...

HEH HEH HEH HEH...

I GUESS THAT DRINK OF YOURS REALLY DOES EXIST IF MILO KNOWS ABOUT IT...

fw-

ump

YOU'RE SCARING ME...

AND THEN YOU'LL BECOME OBSESSED WITH IT!!

grabby

JUST ONE SIP, AND YOU'LL UNDER-STAND...

grabby

AH HA HA HA!

- A FEW MOMENTS LATER-

daze...

sluuump...

WHAT HAPPENED WHILE WE WERE GONE?

ERM...

?

This is...

mumble mumble mumble

HE'S BEEN LIKE THAT EVER SINCE HE TOOK A SIP OF THAT DRINK FROM MILO.

BEATS ME.

Dr Pepper

DR. P*PP*R...

IT IS A BLACK AND SWEET CARBONATED DRINK, BUT...

DECIDEDLY DISAPPOINTING ...

WHAT'S THAT?

THAT JELLIED-ALMOND FLAVOR AND THE SLIGHT DAMP SCENT ARE UNMISTAKABLE...

Your meal is now ready to be served.

Thank you very much for waiting.

I FIGURED THIS WOULD HAPPEN...

APPARENTLY, IT'S UNIQUE TO THIS PLANET.

I'M SO EXCITED TO SEE WHAT KIND OF FOOD IT IS!

YEAH!

OH...?

trundle

trundle

CHAK

THIS PLACE REALLY IS HIGH-CLASS.

THERE'RE SO MANY OF THEM...

I'VE NEVER SEEN A MAIDROID BEFORE.

NOT QUITE, NO...

THOUGH I GUESS THEY'RE NOT NEW TO YOU, CHRIS.

UNFOR-TUNATELY, I, UNIT S-48, AM NOT FOR SALE.

HUH?

WHAT? YOU WANT ONE?

MY SINCERE APOLO-GIES...

I WAS JUST CURIOUS BECAUSE I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE BEFORE!

HOWEVER, THIS MODEL IS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE...

NO, NO, THAT'S OKAY!

I CAN TAKE CARE OF ALL THE CAPTAIN'S NEEDS!

NO OFFENSE, MS. MAIDROID.

BESIDES, WE DON'T NEED A MAIDROID ON OUR SHIP.

MIMI.

LOOK...

ERM, CAPTAIN?

I SUPPOSE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ONE EITHER...

"I WANT ONE OF THOSE!!"

HMMM...

THAT'S WHAT HE'S THINKING...

CAPTAIN HIRO?!

YES, PLEASE!

CAPTAII-INN!!

SHALL I SEND FOR A CATALOG WITH ALL AVAILABLE MODELS?

ALSO, I AM AN ANDROID, NOT A ROBOT.

EVERY MAN DREAMS OF HAVING A MAID ROBOT ...

YOU DON'T NEED ONE!

to be continued

1000
750
600
450
300
150
0
ZG-23:HY-02:RE

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

REBORN AS A SPACE MERCENARY

I WOKE UP PILOTING THE STRONGEST STARSHIP! Vol.5

art: SHUNICHI MATSUI story: RYUTO character design: TETSUHIRO NABESHIMA

TRANSLATION
Kristjan Rohde

LETTERING
Alexandra Gunawan

COVER DESIGN
Nicky Lim

LOGO DESIGN
George Panella

PROOFREADER
Kurestin Armada

COPY EDITOR
B. Lillian Martin

EDITOR
Nick Mamatas

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
Eve Grandt

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Lissa Pattillo

PREPRESS TECHNICIAN
Melanie Ujimori
Jules Valera

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Julie Davis

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
Adam Arnold

PUBLISHER
Jason DeAngelis

MEZAMETARA SAIKYO SOBI TO UCHUSEN MOCHI DATTA NODE, IKKODATE MEZASHITE YOHEI TOSHITE JIYU NI IKITAI Vol.5
©Shunichi Matsui 2022 ©Ryuto 2022
First published in Japan in 2022 by KADOKAWA CORPORATION, Tokyo.
English translation rights arranged with KADOKAWA CORPORATION, Tokyo.

No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without written permission from the copyright holders. This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. Any information or opinions expressed by the creators of this book belong to those individual creators and do not necessarily reflect the views of Seven Seas Entertainment or its employees.

Seven Seas press and purchase enquiries can be sent to Marketing Manager Lianne Sentar at press@gomanga.com. Information regarding the distribution and purchase of digital editions is available from Digital Manager CK Russell at digital@gomanga.com.

Seven Seas and the Seven Seas logo are trademarks of Seven Seas Entertainment. All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-1-68579-575-7
Printed in Canada
First Printing: June 2023
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Ripped by danke-Empire

READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!

Follow us online: www.SevenSeasEntertainment.com

ZG:23:HY:02:RE

The Ice Queen Cometh!

Having won a battle for Serena, cubicle jockey turned space mercenary Hiro plots a course to a fancy resort system for a well-deserved vacation. There's no rest for warriors though, as Hiro and crew are ambushed by more pirates! Among the spoils, Hiro discovers a cold sleep pod, and within lies a beautiful noble girl! With another hapless woman falling in his lap, what's a merc to do...except perhaps take a knee and accept a knighthood?

OLDER TEEN (15+)

Seven Seas Entertainment
sevenseasentertainment.com